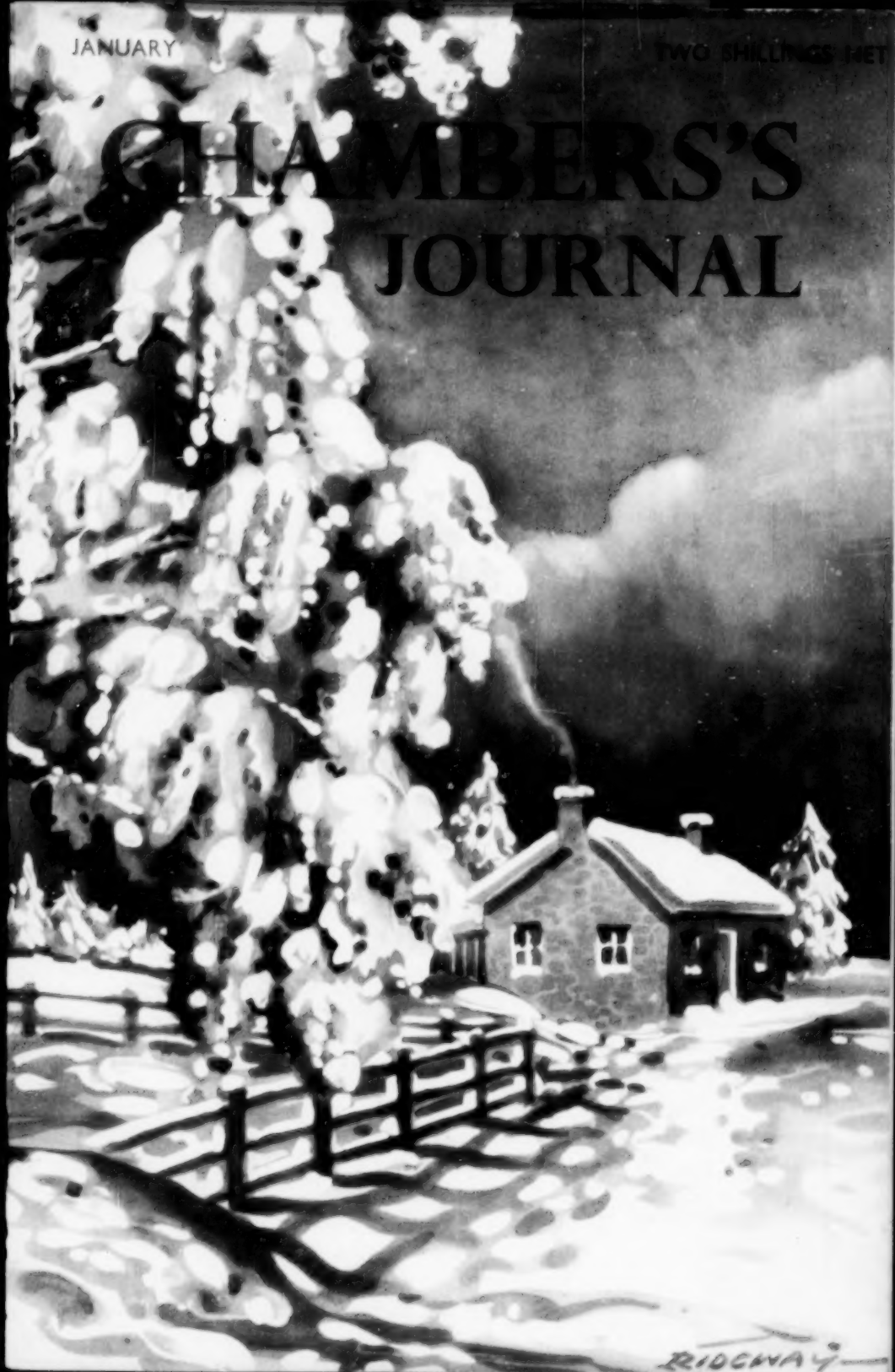


JANUARY

TWO SHILLINGS NET

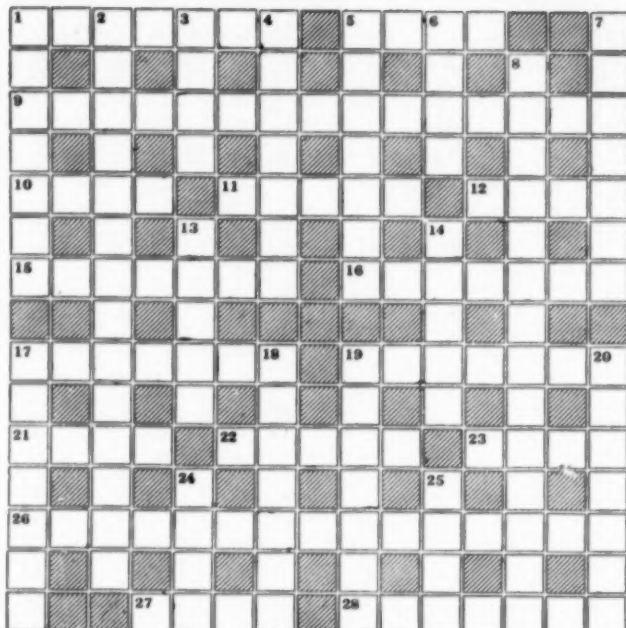
CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL



CHAMBERS'S WORLD GAZETTEER CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 Flemish town famed for cambric linen (7).
- 5 N. English river of ship-building connections (4).
- 9 There are sixteen of these in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence (two words: 8.7).
- 10 Saint with a royal and ancient connection (4).
- 11 Island under Netherland power till 1949, now part of 8 down (5).
- 12 French mandate territory, on the point of departure? (4).
- 15 Desert outpost where the tide turned (7).
- 16 & 22 across. French Dept. famed for its chateaux (three words: 5.2.5).
- 17 Strait flanked by Scylla and Charybdis (7).
- 19 Sow rice and get New Zealand pines (7).
- 21 Unit of currency of 21 down (4).
- 22 See 16 across.
- 23 Name for plant named by Gazetteer as Japanese flora (4).
- 26 Dash our N. British Colony in the New World (two words: 7.8).
- 27 Cut short a Hungarian lake to give a Welsh one (4).
- 28 Baslam is no prophet in a southern state (7).



JOAN BENYON

25

DOWN

- 1 An Italian region plus a hundred makes an Anglo-Saxon one (7).
- 2 All main targets off S. America (two words: 8.6).
- 3 Type of coastline due to submergence, resulting in promontories and bays (4).
- 4 Georgian, for example, or Spanish or Portuguese (7).
- 5 Slip up on mixed oil in Libya (7).
- 6 Otherwise 'El Bahr, the river'; is Blue, White and 4160 miles long (4).
- 7 Farewell to recreation on the Solent? (7).
- 8 Comprising the East Indies and many smaller islands (two words: 10.4).

DOWN (contd.)

- 13 Curtail circumference for this Red Sea island (5).
- 14 Scene of Italian/Abyssinian conflicts in 1896 and 1935 (5).
- 17 Madras coast first contacted by Vasco da Gama (7).
- 18 Town of Uttar Pradesh, more generally known as Oudh (7).
- 19 Argentine city, Mexican town and Andalusian province (7).
- 20 E. European district of mineral importance (7).
- 24 Tuscan city with famed campanile (4).
- 25 Seaport of Almeria (4).

Three prizes of book tokens to the value of ten shillings and sixpence each will be awarded to the senders of the first correct solutions opened.

Entries must arrive not later than the 16th January.

Envelopes should be clearly marked **CROSSWORD** in the top left-hand corner. The closing date unavoidably confines the entry to those resident in Great Britain, N. Ireland and Eire.

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Part 1, January 1956.

F 1

CHAMBERS'S DICTIONARY CROSSWORD No. 19 (December)

SOLUTION

Across: 1, Scramble; 5, Cliche; 9, Rebuttal; 10, Chimes; 12, Knife rest; 14, Nasty; 15, Tag; 16, Duenna; 19, Rôles; 22, Fraud; 23, Athens; 25, Eon; 28, Lemur; 29, Collegian; 32, Venial; 33, Cavalier; 34, Accede; 35, Caressed.

Down: 1, Stroke; 2, Rubric; 3, Mitre; 4, Lease; 6, Lohengrin; 7, Camisole; 8, Essayist; 11, Attach; 13, Rue; 17, Underhand; 18, Nuance; 20, Effluvia; 21, Harmonic; 24, Ell; 26, Mimics; 27, Snored; 30, Llama; 31, Evade.

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MAURICE WALSH

I

THE harvest was about over, and already the tang of the fall was in the air. The high, clear sky was brittle and coldly blue, and there was counterfeit in the gold of the sunlight. The green of the aftergrass was beginning to fade, the paling stubblefields were no longer dotted with corn-stooks, and faintly from the distance came the throbbing zoom of a threshing-machine biting at the barley sheaves. That snarling zoom always reminded me that the distilling season was close at hand. However, I was no longer interested in distillation as at one time I had been in the Highlands.

I sat at the scarred desk in my workshop, an idle pencil in my fingers, and unfocused eyes on the Bramley apples turning red down the slope of my garden. But I was not in the throes of composition. The thought in my mind was that soon now the woodcock would come drifting south from Scotland and far Norrway, and the greylag drive in in honking wedges over the sloblands along the coast. I contemplated myself amongst the sallies and the fuzes of the Wicklow hills, my springer

spaniel Lum ranging close in front, and a brown bird exploding out of every bush—well, say every tenth bush.

The door behind me opened quietly, and feet shuffled softly across the druggetted floor. Fire-irons clinked mutedly. Thomasheen James, my man-of-no-work, was building up the fire. His high tenor voice made complaint remotely. 'Nary a word wrote the whole bloody mornin', and me with my eye on him round the corner of the woodshed! A dam' nice way of keepin' a pack of wolfs from the back-door—an' meself no longer fit for hard labourin'!'

I didn't turn head, but I withdrew my mind from the Wicklow coverts, and switched it to Thomasheen James. Thomasheen James—that lean, wiry, sandy-polled half-tinker who was close-thirled to no man, because he carried freedom under his hat! For twenty years he had been loosely linked to me for his own purposes, but when the wandering spirit moved him he went off on the loose foot to the winding roads of Ireland, and returned again as surely as the woodcock and the wild-geese.

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Well, he and I, together, had had some strange adventures, and, now, at the end of twenty years, I felt a queer responsibility for the wastrel.

He was still musing aloud. 'Ay, yesterday, ere-yesterday, and the day before, twenty years man and boy, I done my share on these here premises.'

'Transference of thought, mangled in transmission,' I murmured.

'Plain Inglish is good enough for any man,' he said petulantly. 'What are you after saying?'

'That for twenty years man and boy you've been a mere bloodsucker on these premises.'

'Fair enough,' said Thomasheen James agreeably. 'Sure there was always a dacent spot in you by searchin' for it—hard. As good as a bank-deposit account many's the time.'

I knew of old this opening gambit for a touch, and I countered it coldly. 'Your bank account is long overdrawn. Get outside where you belong!'

'Very well so.' I heard his feet shuffle doorwards and pause. 'But, mind you, the first and last rule in business circles—and you ought to know—is never write off a bad debt ever. That's the ind of it. Float another loaf o' bread in the water, and trust to luck.'

'What sort of loaf now?' I asked unwisely, and turned in my chair.

THOMASHEEN JAMES had stirred my curiosity, as he had intended, and went on from there. He came back to the fireside, leant an elbow on the mantel, and considered me possessively out of a china-blue eye. Already he was in his hard-weather rig. The fragment of a plaid rug was draped on his shoulders like an Inverness cape, and his narrow hips were kilted with a jute sugar-bag. A foredone victim, I moved a nonchalant hand. 'Out with it—and I am not your bank account.'

He pointed his chin at me. I was his meat, if it took him a week, and he knew that I knew it. 'Take it aisy, me good sir. 'Tis only how I was thinking you might be a judgmatic sort of man in some ways, and your advice could be listened to if not evaded. What would you say, now, to me going into a bit of a business company for the three hard months of the winter season?'

'I would say: "Go to it—but not with me,"' I told him promptly.

'Not never—not even as a sleepy partner,' he said firmly. 'Me company is already signed, sealed, and delivered.'

'Company! What sort of company?' My curiosity was livening.

He was not to be drawn that easily. 'A company of unlimited liabilities,' he said grandly, 'for the three months beforesaid, to be resumed again once more for the second time on a suitable occasion.'

Derision was the one weapon to breach his defences, and I used it. 'Nonsense! Who the devil would go into business with the likes of you?'

He reared up. 'A thousand if I wanted 'em,' he yelled. 'There's Davy Hand for wan—'

'Stop there!' I barked. 'Not Davy Hand?'

'I'll keep me eye skinned on him—the scut,' said Thomasheen James.

Davy Hand was a disreputable, but likeable, little Dublin Jackeen, a breeder of fancy canaries and fighting terriers: a round little tub of a man with a black overcoat buttoned tightly over a round paunch winter and summer, and a rusty bowler-hat that he took off last thing at night, and donned first thing in the morning. When he and Thomasheen James went into partnership it was time for honest men to get out from under. Honest or not, I, too, was getting out from under.

'Go to it, Mr O'Doran!' I said. 'Davy Hand will cheat you, or you'll cheat Davy Hand, and both of you together would cheat me—if you got the chance. You won't.' I slapped the desk definitely. 'I'll have no hand, act, or part in any dishonest scheme of yours.'

He straightened from the mantel, threw back his plaid, and lifted imploring hands to heaven. His voice lifted. 'Holy Saint Pether! There he goes agin buck-leppin' to conclusives!' He brought a hand down and pointed it at me accusingly. 'Thim words you're after usin' are libelious, and no witness present. Dishonest schame, says you! Honest as the daylight, says I! And more than that, virchous as the Gardin of Eden—and money in it besides! Be the powders o' war, 'tis the only business of a capital nature with honesty and profit runnin' neck to neck. Honesty, I said! Sure, isn't our chairman Davy Hand's brother-in-law?'

'Not Ned Lowry?' I said and sat up.

'That shook you,' said Thomasheen James triumphantly. 'Yes, sir! Nedeen Lowry his

UNLIMITED LIABILITY

own self. He thrun up his job with the Gasper Guilcoyne, and meself and Davy Hand is going into partnership with him for the winter.'

This was something I had to consider. I gazed at and through Thomasheen James, but my mind was on Ned Lowry. Ned was a thoroughly sound man, and his integrity was beyond question. He was, or perhaps had been, gamekeeper to Sir Jasper Guilcoyne, the famous bird-lover, and I had often been out with him on the moors and through the coverts. Any scheme under his leadership was bound to be above board.

Already I had an inkling of what that scheme might be, for if Ned Lowry had given up gamekeeping he would engage in some similar activity where he would have a freer hand—say, contracting for the winter trapping of an estate down the coast, where he could also engage on some professional fowling amongst the wild-geese and ducks on the marshes and sloblands. That was it, of course! And he would require a couple of assistants too. I was jumping to conclusions.

I HAD brought my eyes back to focus on Thomasheen James. He might lie to me, but I would know it. 'The truth now, Mr O'Doran,' I said sternly. 'Are you really going into—this scheme with Ned Lowry for the winter?'

'I am,' he answered boldly. 'That's right, I am—if—' he lifted a forefinger stiffly—if, and this is the knot in the line—if, I said—if I can raise me share of the capital fund. Blasht it, isn't that why I am on my two bended knees to you?'

Figuratively he was. And, indeed, if he were to share in the profits of Ned Lowry's scheme he must pay his share of the expenses. Profit there would be, and first-class sport too. Already I was beginning to envy Thomasheen James. And, also, I had to admit to myself that Ned Lowry could not have chosen two better assistants than Davy Hand and Thomasheen James. They were really good men in the open—if watched—keen and tough and daring, knowing everything about ferrets and polecats and snares and nets, and quite useful with a fowling-piece too—if they could raise or steal one.

Here I got to my feet, went to the corner where my cased twelve-bore leant, put it in the wall-press amongst the fishing tackle, locked

the door, and put the key into my pocket.

'You're accusin' me down the wrong street,' said Thomasheen James offensively.

'Don't forget the time you borrowed that gun unbeknownst, and nearly blew Sir Jasper's midriff through his backbone,' I reminded him.

'Be the capersjo,' cried Thomasheen James warmly, 'you have a memory like the Angel Gabriel, an' he sendin' a man to hell for a coupla mortal sins forty years forgot!'

I went back to my chair and turned my back to Thomasheen James. I kept my voice casual. 'Out of mere curiosity,' I said, 'at what figure would you estimate your share of the capital fund?'

'Aha!' he cried. 'So we're down to the bed of the rock at long last.' He came over to the side of the desk, put a bony fist on it, and was silent for so long that I knew he was busy calculating how far he would turn the screw.

'Well?' I queried.

He tapped the desk with sharp knuckles. 'Gie me time. I never robbed no man. I was just thinkin' that by parin' me needs and necessities to the marrow I could do with—just manage be the skin o' me teeth with—say, fifty pounds. Wait—wait—wait! Couldn't you make it forty? Wouldn't you say thirty, and God love you?' He spread his arms. 'Have you no heart in your buzzum? Thirty pounds, and me back is through the stone wall!'

Thomasheen James has been a source of profit to me in his time, and I have a habit of secretly earmarking a certain figure to be doled out to him when the occasion demands, and it always does—as now. 'When do you want this twenty pounds?' I said gruffly.

'Twenty is it? Very well so,' he said resignedly. 'The sooner the safer, and God increase your store.'

'Very good. You can have it to-morrow, and I'll make it twenty-five.'

'My gallant friend, and me thinkin' I had a week's work to get it out of you.' He touched my sleeve softly. 'Do you know this—you're the wan man I would stand with in the ranks o' death agin Julius Caesar the Greek? And look at here! I'm no beggar or chooser. You'll get your capital back, every cint of it, and a dividend besides to astonish a Yankee.' He threw his hands up. 'Oh, holy wars! Why didn't I stand out for forty and him softenin' already?'

Thomasheen James got his thirty pounds—

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

yes, thirty—and disappeared. Well, he had often disappeared before and, not infrequently, an S.O.S. had come back to me. But this time he should be safe enough in the hands of Ned Lowry. What I overlooked was that Ned Lowry was a native of the County of Mayo,

and that in that county certain daring men pursue a winter activity that is dangerously illegal, but quite praiseworthy according to the ethical code of Mayo men—and Highland men.

(To be continued)

February First Story : *Never Pipe the Fiddler Aboard* by Francis Gott.

Kate Warne—First Woman Detective?

BRENDA DAWSON

EVERYONE is so centenary-conscious these days that it is difficult to believe that one of 1955's centenaries may have been overlooked. Whenever an institution or an article of daily use has been with us for a hundred years, the anniversary is celebrated by a banquet, an exhibition, at least one broadcast, lectures to schoolchildren, free samples for housewives, and possibly even a commemorative postage-stamp.

This kind of publicity is so highly organised nowadays that it seems impossible that even the most insignificant centenary could elude the publicists and their researchers. Yet should not the detective profession have celebrated in 1955 the centenary of the woman detective?

Could America's security organisations, which complained some time ago of an unsatisfied demand for 27,000 more female detectives in Government and private enterprises, have missed such a chance for recruiting women to this profession? Can feminists really have overlooked this milestone on the road to sex equality? Cynics may explain this omission, of course, by suggesting that in reality women have been busy in the role of detective since Eve first snooped upon Adam.

But Eve, like all but her most recent successors, was an amateur. The woman detective whose appointment in 1855 we might have celebrated was a professional.

She was an American woman, Kate Warne. Apparently she was a person of some strength of character, stolid enough to watch her quarry patiently and not to be unduly disturbed in a sudden crisis, yet quick in wits and action. It was at her own suggestion that she was employed in 1855 by the famous Allan Pinkerton as his first female detective. Later she headed his 'female branch'.

PINKERTON, a Scotsman whose career as a sergeant in the Glasgow police had been cut short by some trouble over Chartism, had created in Chicago a detective force to capture thieves raiding railway property. This organisation had evolved into Pinkerton's National Detective Agency some three years before Mrs Warne joined Pinkerton's permanent staff. Pinkerton had been engaged in crime-detection in various parts of Illinois since 1843, when he had helped to run down a gang of counterfeiters in Kane County, and it is probable that Kate Warne had worked with him on

KATE WARNE—FIRST WOMAN DETECTIVE?

some of his earlier cases in a purely freelance capacity.

She had apparently assisted him in a murder investigation early in the 'fifties, when his agency was still called the North Western Police Agency. The agency then wanted to uncover evidence against a banker at Greenville, Ohio, whom Pinkerton's staff suspected of poisoning his wife. The motive was said to be the banker's infatuation for his children's governess, and, by posing as a fortune-teller, Kate Warne soon wormed her way into this woman's confidence. Peering into a crystal-ball in a darkened room, she described obscure incidents from the governess's past—information which Pinkerton had obtained from his client, the woman's own brother. When this apparently all-seeing fortune-teller hinted at murder, the governess wept and confessed that she had tried to poison her brother on three occasions. She also admitted that she had bigamously married the banker, and that he had told her that he was giving his wife arsenic.

MRS WARNE'S patient attention to her work seems to have overcome any doubts Pinkerton shared with the rest of his profession about employing women, and he entrusted her with the most delicate tasks. When a conspiracy to assassinate Abraham Lincoln on the night of 22nd February 1861 was uncovered, it was Kate Warne who was chosen by Pinkerton to help him escort the President-elect from Philadelphia to Washington for his inauguration.

Historians of the Civil War usually assert that Lincoln 'slipped secretly on the night train, accompanied only by Ward Hill Lamon and a Mr E. J. Allen, otherwise known as Pinkerton.' This version, it would seem, hardly does justice to America's first woman detective. No doubt Lamon, a young lawyer friend of Lincoln who had appointed himself the new President's bodyguard, would have proved useful had the assassins attacked, though even the heavily-built Lamon might have found himself handicapped by the weight of the amazing armoury of pistols, knives, slingshots, and brass knuckle-dusters with which he had equipped himself for the journey. But Mrs Warne seems to have played a more important role in frustrating the plot.

It was Kate who had rushed from Baltimore to New York City to intercept Lincoln's party at the Astor House and confirm an earlier

warning from Pinkerton. Through a member of Lincoln's suite who was a friend of Pinkerton, she passed to the President-elect details of the plot and arranged for him to meet her employer in Philadelphia to discuss means of thwarting the conspirators.

For security reasons, news of the discovery was not given even to the Vice-President or other members of the Government. Mrs Warne is said to have been the only woman among the handful of people entrusted with the secret. Later she was also one of the six persons who knew that Lincoln's original plan of leaving the train at Baltimore and crossing the city by carriage had been abandoned. To her was given the task of booking accommodation on a Washington-bound sleeper to which Lincoln could secretly transfer from a special train that was to bring him from a banquet at Harrisburg. Pinkerton hoped that a woman would be able to make the reservation without arousing suspicion that an official personage was travelling. Her discreet handling of the railway staff helped Lincoln to dodge the feared ambush at Baltimore.

Instead of a burly bodyguard recruited from the boxing-booths, it was Kate Warne who waited in the sleeping-car for the arrival of the new President, his friend Lamon, and Pinkerton. Lincoln must have been amused at the contrast between his escorts—Lamon, the heavily-armed amateur, and this quiet woman professional. Her reticule, crammed with last-minute reports to be handed to Pinkerton, may have been innocent of even a pistol. Certainly this first woman detective was no gun-moll. And on this particular assignment, as it happened, she had no need to be. Apart from a delay at Baltimore, where even Pinkerton became nervous that passengers on the platform might discover Lincoln's identity and cause the plotters to change their plans, the eight-hour journey to Washington was made without any untoward incident.

THE Civil War that followed so swiftly upon Lincoln's inauguration was probably the first war in which women were employed as detectives. Only six days after the bombardment of Fort Sumter had opened the conflict, in the spring of 1861, Allan Pinkerton was offering the United States Government the services of his women as well as his men employees in whichever 'class of Secret Service is the most dangerous.' Speaking of

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his eighteen detectives, he assured the President: 'My Force comprises both sexes—all of good character and well-skilled in their business.'

That one of Pinkerton's women was not as skilled as he might have wished was shown in the case of Rose Greenhow, a widow who used her undoubted charm and her position in Washington society to spy for the Confederacy. Pinkerton, who had moved the staff of his Chicago bureau to the capital, had employed as many as five of his men in watching Mrs Greenhow's house in 16th Street. After identifying the politicians, generals, and journalists among the stream of men who visited her, Pinkerton obtained a warrant and searched the house for traces of the war secrets he was certain the fashionable Rose was sending to the enemy.

He took with him two male agents and a female detective, whose name history does not seem to have recorded. Perhaps history was only being kind, for this woman made a hash of the investigation. She was told to search Mrs Greenhow for the incriminating papers, but in doing so she forgot to make the suspect peel off her stockings. This error gave Mrs Greenhow an idea. Passing the papers to a Miss Mackail, a friend visiting the house, Mrs Greenhow told her to conceal them in her

stockings, hoping that the female detective would repeat her blunder. She did—and, due solely to his woman assistant's carelessness, Pinkerton found himself without any documentary evidence to support the charge.

Despite such setbacks, women detectives seem to have played a successful, if small, part in the Government's efforts to clear wartime Washington of its spies and criminal gangs. No doubt they were able to operate more easily in the capital than in the older American cities, for in Washington a woman ladylike in dress and speech enjoyed far greater freedom than in, say, New York or Philadelphia. She could go unescorted into the Capitol and other public buildings, and even visit private and commercial houses, without any need of male relative to vouch for her respectability.

Women detectives were widely used throughout the rest of the country by the United States Secret Service, to which Kate Warne herself belonged from 1863 until the end of the Civil War. After the submission of the South in 1865, a force of female detectives was organised in New Orleans with Mrs Warne in command. She died three years later.

Will those of us armchair criminologists interested in this first woman detective have to wait until the centenary of her death to learn more of her career?

The Burning Bush

*Morning with winter when the frond-high floor
Of the wood warms the blood to tingling,
Fir and rhododendron glow green in black places,
The gorse in haste already spiking gold,
And oh my love, the little gentle copses,
With ten silver stems of tenuous birches.*

*Magpies we saw mostly, tail topmost on torn fences,
And ragged cows in a row eating mangolds,
Mute-eyed and no tail savage for flies;
It was grey the day, denied the sun,
But you smiled and your pliant eyes held summer,
And oh, my winter ran a fox to cover.*

*Home we brought the rapier gorse in bloom
To blaze a corner by a darkened sill,
To say to the few when many gather:
'This is the Light in the winter weather;
Oh take this flaming tongue, this bush now burning,
And light your hearts against your dark returning.'*

MADGE HALES.

In Search of the Golden Fleece

LESLIE GARDINER

THE chart of the east coast of Sardinia shows Golfo Aranci to be a lonely spot. It is obviously just another of those big, empty, landlocked harbours with which the Mediterranean is so abundantly supplied, where, after all the fleets of the world have anchored, there will still be room for the fortnightly steamer from the mainland to pass on her way to drop a couple of passengers or pick up a few head of cattle at some half-derelict jetty near the head of the gulf.

First sight of the place fully confirmed one's fears that, of all the remote and desolate inlets of Sardinia, this was the remotest and most desolate.

Two big black headlands, devoid of tree or dwelling, frowned over the narrow entrance to the bay, whose blue waters, sparkling in the sunshine, looked far more inviting than the wilderness of its shores.

Golfo Aranci means Bay of Oranges, but here was not a sign of vegetation, apart from patches of discouraged-looking mastic and buckthorn that might, in less harsh circumstances, have developed into the typical *macchie* of the islands.

Steep layers of hills rolled down to the sea on every side and shut off the haven from the hinterland. The inevitable concrete jetty projected from the shore: why anyone had found it worth while to build one was a mystery. And here and there a spire of smoke rose from some hidden cottage.

But except for these signs one would have taken the spot for unexplored territory—an outpost into which even the Sardinians, a solitary people, would hardly penetrate.

I ALWAYS make a point of going ashore in strange places, however unpromising their appearance. The view from seaward is often deceptive, and it was so in this case.

Out of sight in a fold of the hills I found a village, a poor, silent place, lying in the shadow of a gaunt red railway-station that marked the end of a single-track line. A timetable in the booking-office—the place was deserted—suggested that a diesel rail-car actually travelled once a day along this line, linking Aranci Bay with the main railway-system many miles inland and putting its detached community within reach of exotic cities like Sassari and Cagliari. But the whole place had so much the character of a flimsy stage-set, abandoned long ago by the strolling players who had brought it here, that one felt the timetable, too, must be all make-believe.

I had given myself only half-an-hour to see the sights. A short walk through the village, much like any other Italian fishing village, except that the inhabitants kept pigs in row upon row of holes in the hillside, and it was time to return.

On the way back to the jetty I stopped at the tavern. It was a lucky diversion, for I might otherwise have left Golfo Aranci ignorant of the one feature that makes a visit there really worth while.

Many of the notable curiosities of this world are confined in the unlikeliest places, their presence unsuspected by strangers, who never know what they have missed until it is too late. So it might have turned out at Aranci Bay, had it not been for the tavern, and Graziella.

GRAZIELLA was a natural history student from Pavia, a slim, vivacious ash-blond, with an insatiable appetite for zoological information. Her vacation had taken the form of a busman's holiday among the fauna of Sardinia, and she was rounding it off with a few days in the neighbourhood of the famous nature reserve at Golfo Aranci.

It was the first time I had heard of the nature

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reserve—they did not show one on the chart.

'But why are you here,' asked Graziella, 'if not to visit the reserve? And how can you go away before you have seen the Golden Fleece?'

I begged for elucidation.

Throughout the ages, she told me, historians had puzzled over the origin and meaning of the Golden Fleece, the holy emblem which was stolen from the shrine of Zeus and recovered by Jason and his Argonauts from Colchis on the furthest shores of the Black Sea. Some thought it must have been a scroll, bound in sheepskin, which contained secrets of Chaldean magic. Others suggested that it was an ordinary ram's fleece impregnated with specks of gold from a Colchian river.

Many colourful theories, in fact, had been advanced. The least far-fetched, and the one supported by most experts, was that the Golden Fleece came from the royal back of a rare mountain ram which was once king of beasts in Mediterranean lands.

'A few kilometres from this spot,' Graziella went on, 'is a national park, where many of the interesting creatures of Sardinia that are elsewhere extinct are protected. Among them is the mouflon, a kind of goat with a long silky fleece. It is found nowhere in the world except at Golfo Aranci, and it is the oldest species of animal in Sardinia. Zoologists trace its descent from the Golden Fleece of mythology.'

The temptation to repair the shortcomings of a classical education by gazing on a live link with ancient history was not to be resisted. We at once made plans for a visit to the reserve.

THE next day found us tramping along the railway-track, for want of suitable roads or footpaths. It wound like a scenic-railway in and out of the hills, emerging on the other side of the peninsula to follow a coastline of strangely-twisted rocks and deep caverns.

It was afternoon before we arrived at the boundary-fence of the reserve. Notices everywhere said 'VIETATO INGRESSO', but Graziella felt confident that it would be all right to enter, and so we clambered into the forbidden area.

Within ten steps we were knee-deep in tortoises of every size and colour. Hoary old black beasts, each big enough for a couple of children to ride on, stuck out their scrawny necks and hissed at us, then lumbered off into

the undergrowth. A dozen or more bright-shelled miniatures—babies, said Graziella, perhaps not more than ten years old—scuttled back and forth like crabs, showing an astonishing turn of speed in their haste to avoid being trampled underfoot as their great-grandparents ploughed through them.

The pursuing hiss of the tortoises had hardly died away when our nerves were set jangling again by a sudden clatter in a near-by thicket, and a covey of tiny partridges whirled over our heads. My companion identified them as the rare Sardinian variety, another species without a known habitat outside the island.

Either we had broken in on the one thickly-populated corner of the reserve, or the disturbance caused by our entrance had warned off every other denizen. At any rate, we scoured the park all afternoon without seeing another sign of the fascinating animal freaks which, I had assumed, would be jostling for elbow-room inside.

This, to me, was a relief, as well as a disappointment. There are said to be no really savage animals in the nature reserve at Aranci, not even snakes, but the atmosphere of the place, especially after sunset, is decidedly eerie.

As evening closed down, a choir of hungry animal noises tuned up for its nightly anthem. Strange, heavy-winged insects blundered through the air. The possibility, visualised without a qualm at the inn, of being confronted by one of the famous wild-cats of Sardinia was by this time enough to decide us to call off the search for the Golden Fleece.

And at that moment we saw him. He stood on an exposed hillock, rampant against the darkening sky, forefeet poised delicately against a shrub, heraldically perfect, munching leaves. He wore long, swept-back horns and a glossy coat of yellow hair that fell to his hind-hoofs in ringlets as sleek and kempt as those of any regimental mascot. We looked at him, and he looked at us, and placidly continued his meal.

Nothing could have exceeded the refinement and serenity with which that scion of the oldest dynasty in Sardinia stripped his tree of its tenderest shoots. In due course he gracefully lowered his forefeet to the ground, gazed about him, and gave a dignified sniff—whether of disdain or merely acknowledgment, it would be hard to say.

Then the Golden Fleece trotted away into the night, and we, our quest fulfilled, followed suit.



The Genius and the Lady

ARTHUR PIKE

TO an intellect as habitually inquisitive as that of Inspector John Forbes there was no consolation in the fact that the riddle promised to make no demands upon his professional services. Many aspects of the problem savoured of the supernatural, in which he did not believe, and he was irritated by the refusal of his practical mind to reduce them to terms of the normal.

He was in the process of discussing the difficulty with his wife, Carol, who combined a lively intelligence with that precious faculty of subconscious reasoning known as intuition.

She sat before him, her pert dark head tilted to one side, and essayed with marked success the rare accomplishment of looking at once wise and beautiful. 'Tell me about it from the beginning,' she said.

'Right, my dear,' said John, settling himself comfortably in his chair. 'I was introduced to Pierre Lemoin at the Club. He shook hands with a grip that made me wince.'

Carol, contemplating her husband's massive form, raised an eyebrow as an indication that she was suitably impressed.

'From the beginning,' Forbes continued, 'I felt that there was something very odd about him. Perhaps I am abnormally observant, for so far I appear to be the only one to notice his

strangeness. He is vaguely ethereal, but there can be no doubt about his physical presence. Although of average height, his immense broadness gives him a dwarf-like air, an effect enhanced by a sort of spritish charm that is as irresistible as it is inexplicable.'

'Why inexplicable?'

'Don't interrupt. I was just coming to that.'

His wife grimaced and resumed her air of solemnity.

'Lemoin is one of the ugliest men I have ever seen. I thought at the time that that was the reason for his strangeness. I failed to understand how such a conglomeration of facial attributes, even when considered in conjunction with some indefinable quality of character, could actually convey the impression that the man was handsome. Here again I appear to be the only one to notice how ugly he really is—everyone else is under some sort of spell.'

'But not my dear down-to-earth husband,' his wife interposed.

'Quite so.'

'Do you think he is a criminal?'

'No-o-o-o. At least, that isn't what attracted my interest at first. I watched him carefully, noticing the smooth power of his stride and the manner in which he rises from a

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chair without using his arms to help himself up. I formed the tentative conclusion that he was an athlete, but he possesses a quality of mind that one does not normally associate with the search for physical perfection.' Forbes stirred uneasily in his chair. 'That is the thing that puzzles me. I have never met anyone so well-informed on such a diversity of topics. Once I heard him laying down a ruling on some obscure point of law to the very learned Judge Filbright, and what is more, quoting case after case in support of his argument.'

'Perhaps Lemoin is a lawyer.'

Forbes cast his wife a look of deep scorn.

'No!'

'Oh,' she said, crestfallen.

'However, quite a reasonable assumption with only the facts before you to go on,' he said kindly.

Carol's face brightened.

'Of course,' Forbes went on, 'if you would refrain from interruption I would have the opportunity of dispelling your ignorance.'

Her eyes widened in mock anger at his treachery.

'Filbright wasn't the only one to receive the benefit of Lemoin's knowledge,' Forbes said, grinning. 'There was our brilliant friend Pertwee, the physicist. Most of the things they discussed were beyond me, but I could tell that Lemoin was in form by Pertwee's awed admiration. He stood enthralled, his full-moon eyes enormous behind his spectacles.' John's brow contracted in wonderment. 'Filbright and Pertwee were only two of many,' he continued. 'Lemoin has lectured to pretty well everyone in the Club on their pet subjects.'

Forbes paused for a moment and, catching his wife's questioning glance, looked away again uncomfortably. 'Even me.'

'You!' she exclaimed, dutifully incredulous.

'Yes,' Forbes admitted. 'As you know, a man in my profession picks up some very curious snippets of information during his career.'

'Such as that very curious snippet you picked up on the Lemington case? A blonde, I believe?'

'That was strictly in the line of duty,' John replied coldly.

'Never mind. I know the subject must be painful to you. Do carry on.'

With a hurt look, Forbes continued his recital. 'I tried Lemoin with my full reper-

toire of odd facts, but, incredibly, I could broach no subject on which he was not widely informed and upon which he could not enlarge indefinitely.'

John eased himself in his chair. 'Mostly he manages to deliver his lectures unobtrusively, so that his hearers are unaware of what is happening. At the same time, it is as though only part of his mind is attending to his brilliant utterances, and yet his face is forever animated and sparkling with that strange charm.'

'I suppose you made inquiries about him?' asked his wife, who seemed to be thinking at a tangent.

'Naturally. I spoke to Benson, who had proposed his membership. It seems they met on the plane coming over from France, but Benson knows nothing whatever about him. I suggested, very tactfully of course, that he had taken a risk introducing him to the Club under the circumstances, but he is completely under Lemoin's spell and wouldn't hear a word against him.'

'Is he married?' asked Carol, whose mind was off on yet another tack.

'Who? Benson?'

'No. Lemoin.'

'Not to my knowledge. I have never heard him mention a wife.' Forbes paused and then said owlishly: 'Although that would account for his extreme sadness.'

'Sadness?'

'Yes. Once or twice, when he imagined himself to be unobserved, I was surprised to catch a look of utter despair on his face—a despair so profound that it was painful to look upon. This was all the more disconcerting because he appears to have everything that makes for happiness—a brilliant mind, the power to attract admiration and friendship, and more than his share of wealth. Yet it has never occurred to me to be envious. I am, in fact, profoundly sorry for the man and would like to help him.' Forbes looked at his wife.

'Well?' he asked.

NOW that comment was invited, Carol was at a loss for words. She stared moodily into the fire, her faultless brow contracted into tiny thought-wrinkles that did nothing to mar her beauty. 'Do you think it possible that Lemoin is a murderer living with the memory of some foul deed on his conscience?' she asked at last, her eyes widening dramatically.

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'I do not,' Forbes retorted. 'I am certain that he would not harm a fly. You have a nasty mind.'

'Have I, indeed! I rather gathered that your thoughts had followed along similar lines.'

'That was before I really got to know the man. If I am sure of anything, it is that Lemoin is as pure as the driven snow.'

'I hesitate to point this out, my sweet, but it seems to me that you are a little under his spell yourself. Are you not allowing emotion to cloud that faultless analytical mind of yours?'

Forbes considered for a moment. 'You're right, of course,' he said, magnanimously, 'but if you could meet Lemoin you would feel exactly the same as I do.'

'I don't doubt it, but the fact gets us no nearer a solution to the problem. Granted, for the moment, that he is not a criminal, then we are faced with an endless number of possibilities. He may, for instance, have been crossed in love—men derive a great deal of satisfaction from turning disastrous love affairs into their own private hells. That's what Tennyson meant when he said it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.'

'Like most cynicisms that could not be further from the truth,' said John, horrified. 'Anyway, I doubt whether it applies to Lemoin. He is strictly a man's man and I find it difficult to imagine him dallying with the fair sex.'

'Men's men have a remarkable flair for dalliance with the fair sex.'

'It occurs to me that your knowledge of men ill behoves a young woman of impeccable antecedents.'

Carol, whose conscience was perfectly clear in this respect, did not feel it necessary to defend her reputation. She contented herself with a grimace, her mind already exploring other possibilities. 'How well do you know him?'

Forbes hesitated, a little taken aback by the question. 'Not well at all, really, although, strangely enough, he seems to have taken a great liking to me. Perhaps he senses my sympathy.'

'It has not occurred to you, I suppose, to ask him what the trouble is?'

Forbes looked shocked. 'Good lord, no!'

'The trouble with policemen,' said his wife, 'is that they are incapable of asking a direct question. They spend a great deal of the tax-

payer's money exploring the byways of the truth.'

'The people we deal with,' said John drily, 'are inclined to fight shy of direct questions. However, I see the point. You think I should ask him outright?'

'I do.'

Forbes flung his hands into the air. 'Whoever said that women lacked directness?' He smiled. 'I'll speak to him next time we meet.'

PRESSURE of work kept Forbes away from the Club for the next few days and left him with little time to consider the problem of Lemoin, but, one evening, with the tail ends of his current investigation neatly tied up, he felt justified in relaxing for a few hours. After a rewarding meal he was seated in the reading-room sniffing appreciatively at a large brandy when Lemoin entered and came gliding over, moving soundlessly in an aura of dynamic power.

Several brandies later, Forbes felt capable of broaching the subject that was uppermost in his mind. 'I hope you won't resent this question, Pierre, but what exactly is your profession?'

Lemoin stared at him quizzically. 'I knew you would ask that sooner or later.' For a moment he toyed with his glass. 'I have no profession.' His tone was at once bantering and guarded.

'But,' said Forbes, 'where on earth did you pick up your seemingly inexhaustible store of information?'

'I read a lot.'

'Read a lot, be damned!' John's voice was a tone or two above normal. 'You're knowledge is phenomenal—and uncanny.'

'Not uncanny.'

Forbes stared helplessly, striving to control a mounting irritation.

Lemoin continued gently: 'When we speak of the uncanny or supernatural we merely confess our ignorance. Everything conforms to natural laws.' He smiled slightly and without mirth. 'Even I.'

'Perhaps,' said Forbes, 'you will acquaint me with the laws responsible for your seeming omniscience?'

For a moment Lemoin studied John's face intently. 'I believe it might help to tell someone about it. If you will have dinner at my home to-morrow, I will undertake to satisfy your curiosity.'

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THE following evening Forbes, conscious of a mounting feeling of curiosity and anticlimax, made his way to the address Lemoin had given him. The house, backing up on to the Thames and threatening at any moment to slide into the water, seemed vaguely sinister and brooding in the dusk. Climbing the steps, Forbes tugged gingerly at the ancient doorbell. From the distance the sound of traffic came faintly as from another world, muted by the looming shadows of the surrounding buildings. A flood of light spilled out into the street as the door opened abruptly to reveal a manservant, his ruddy cheeks dispelling instantly the gloom of Forbes's imaginings.

Stepping out of the drabness of the street, he was totally unprepared for the vista of beauty confronting him. The wide panelled hall was illuminated by hidden lamps, the soft lighting playing upon several pieces of exquisite statuary disposed about the marbled floor. The effect was breathtaking, and Forbes thought at first that it was gained by some trick of arrangement or lighting. Involuntarily, he stepped forward to the nearest figure, expecting its brilliance to fly on closer acquaintance like the bloom of some stage beauty; but in this case he was not to be disillusioned. The work, imbued mysteriously with an aura of warmth, represented a young girl on the threshold of womanhood. Forbes felt that if he were to reach out a trembling hand the stone would become animated in joyous movement, filling the hall with the source of youth and life itself.

Slowly, as in a dream, he was conscious of the servant hovering at his side. 'Perhaps you will wait in the library, sir?'

Forbes, reluctant to leave the hall, was aware that acquaintance with its further wonders would leave his mind in a still greater turmoil. Somewhere at the back of his brain a question was beginning to form, nagging at the roots of his consciousness, but as yet taking no definite shape.

In the library the shadows retreated and then consolidated to meet the pale radiance of a solitary lamp.

'You may care to look at the paintings, sir. I'll put the lights on.'

The manservant disappeared into the hall, and shortly the room was flooded with light. Forbes was half-prepared this time, yet the sudden onslaught of beauty once again left him stunned and bewildered. The walls,

where they were not filled with books, displayed a variety of canvases—portraits alive in their representations of humanity; pastoral scenes redolent with the tang of the earth and the unceasing movement of nature; fleeting scenes of squalor and despair lifted straight from the slums and crystallised exquisitely on to the canvas. Masterpiece after masterpiece, each of which might have formed the gem of one of the world's great collections, and each incontrovertibly the manifestation of the mind that had conceived the statuary in the hall.

Forbes stood with a hand raised to his throbbing head, bewildered by the array, his senses at once numbed and exhilarated. And then, as he stared from work to work, the question that had troubled him broke like a light upon his consciousness. All at once he was at grips with the tangible. It seemed incredible that he should not recognise the touch of the gentle, loving, knowing hand that had stroked a magic brush across the canvas or modelled the stone into life.

In a dream he walked towards the huge fireplace and abstractedly stirred the glowing embers. Then he sank into a chair, the high back of which enfolded him maternally, cutting out for an instant the turmoil of his thoughts. Compelled by a force that seemed to emanate from outside himself, he raised his eyes to the wall above the mantelpiece. The likeness of Lemoin stared back at him, the despair gleaming like a living thing from the painted eyes.

Forbes slumped deeper into the chair, perspiration beading his brow, the room suddenly receding into the distance as the portrait swam before his bewildered gaze.

'Self-portrait of a genius,' a voice said.

For an instant before he grasped the import of those words Forbes imagined that the painting had spoken. Then he was on his feet and had turned to face Lemoin, his voice gagging in his throat. 'Self-portrait?'

Lemoin nodded.

All at once the facts were beginning to have form and reason.

Lemoin watched him gravely, his feet spread-eagled, his form immense and unreal. 'I suggest we postpone dinner for a while. It would be unkind not to satisfy your curiosity immediately.'

LEMOIN picked up a leather-bound album from a table and, opening it, proffered it

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for Forbes's attention. 'My parents,' he said.

Forbes gazed blankly at the prosaic couple who stared at him with metallic impassivity from the fading daguerreotype.

'I was born in France of peasant stock,' said Lemoin. 'My mother, who had previously had eight children—all of them boys—quite unaccountably died in giving life to me. It is perhaps fortunate for her that she did. My father, poor man, lived in a constant state of bewilderment and fright. He was an illiterate, simple old fellow who remained ignorant of the fact that he had sired a prodigy and was firmly convinced that I was the offspring of the devil. For that reason I was kept in virtual imprisonment on the scrap of land he called his farm until the day he died.'

Lemoin's eyes were happy with memories.

'I don't recall anything of the early years of my existence. It was as though my body was uninhabited by the spirit until I was perhaps five years old. Suddenly I awoke to an awareness of life, like a flower blooming for the first time, as though all the years had been a period of gestation in which my mind absorbed extra nourishment. I discovered some books, treasured by my family for generations, but hitherto unread. I found that I could read. Yes—read with no previous acquaintance with the written word and precious little with the spoken. One volume, I remember, was a little 18th-century philosophical essay. I found that I knew instinctively the answer to many of the questions with which the author only toyed.' Lemoin paused. 'But you are doubtless familiar with the phenomenon of the prodigy?'

'Vaguely,' Forbes admitted.

'Well, at first my progress followed the normal pattern. Finding a flair for reading, I developed it. No miser ever gloated over his treasures more than I over my pitiful little library. My father caught me reading aloud one day and promptly destroyed the books in a fit of superstitious terror. I knew them by heart by this time, so that the loss was small, and, in any case, they were already too limited to meet the needs of my blossoming intellect.

'I turned then to writing. I need not elaborate upon the results of my endeavours, except to say that if they had ever reached the literary world they would have made a reputation for a grown man, let alone a child of six or seven, as I then was.

'After a time, this palled, and I began the first of many long and bitter quarrels with my father. I wanted my freedom—freedom to go

out into the world and discover its wonders. But I was a puny little creature in those days, weak with the long years of confinement, so that my entreaties always resulted in a beating—my father's only possible answer to my devil-sent eloquence. I found solace in adventures of the mind. This is where the normal pattern diverges. Most prodigies are gifted with only one talent, a talent that is often exhausted through exploitation before maturity is reached, but, possibly as the result of my imprisonment, my mind flourished in other fields and never lost its power.'

Lemoin raised his hands and circled them in an encompassing motion.

'It is surprising how much of life one sees from the confines of a badly-lit little room in a remote farmhouse. There is music in the singing of the birds and the wind through the trees; religion in the need to feel wanted and important; painting in the play of sunlight upon a fading wall; astronomy in the stars that twinkle their comfort into the lonely night; and philosophy in the need to give form and reason to one's observations.

'I must have had pre-knowledge of the subjects on which my mind ranged, for when I did finally get out into the world I found that I was far in advance of contemporary thought.

'I believe I was about sixteen before I realised this ambition—even now I am not sure of my age. My father died without warning following a kick from a plough-horse. When my brothers returned from the funeral they found that I had flown.'

John noticed that the sadness had returned to Lemoin's eyes.

'Now that I look back, I know that those days were the only happy ones of my life. I had something to live for—countless things to learn—but after I had been in the world for a while I found that I was bored. Bored because everything came too easily, without conscious effort. I soon exhausted the possibilities of any new subject to which I set my hand. At twenty-five or thereabouts my intellect reached its full powers and I could find nothing to exercise it.'

Lemoin sighed and stared at the album still clutched in his hands, his face devoid of expression, but infinitely pitiful.

'Eventually I abandoned pursuits of the intellect and turned to sport. In no time at all I was winning trophies at all the principal sporting gatherings. I became a swordsman of outstanding ability, an excellent shot, a

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first-class horseman, and so on, *ad infinitum*.'

'But,' Forbes remembered the inconsistency that had troubled him, 'surely yours is not the kind of light that can be hidden under a bushel?'

'In the normal course, no, but I have no wish to be held up as a freak for the entertainment of the world and I have taken a great deal of trouble to cover my tracks. Should, for example, a horseman spring up from nowhere and take all the trophies for show-jumping in, shall we say, Austria, and then gradually fade from the scene, no one will take too much notice. In the same way, a brilliant pianist is discovered in New York and then fades from the limelight. The world is full of such nine-day wonders, and the public has a short memory.'

The pieces of the puzzle were nearly all in place now, and Forbes was conscious of a mounting compassion. For a fleeting instant he understood and felt the full extent of the loneliness and hopelessness of the man before him. He wanted to say something to ease that burden even for a moment, but he could think of nothing that would be remotely adequate.

'We might as well have dinner now,' said Lemoin. 'I think you have had enough for one night.'

Forbes imagined that the meal must have been excellent, but he was too deep in thought to pay it the attention it deserved. They were drinking brandy in the library afterwards, when he suddenly set his glass down with a thump. 'But surely,' he said, 'there must be something you can't do?'

'Of course. There are even things I do not know, but only because they are beyond man's comprehension in his present stage of evolution. I am not concerned with the attainment of the impossible, merely with finding a subject to exercise my faculties. That is one of the reasons I decided to confide in you. I hoped that you would be able to suggest a solution. From your record I know that you possess a great deal of ingenuity and resource.'

'Thank you, but I'm afraid I've never tackled anything quite on this scale before. I feel that if your intellect has been unable to cope with it, then mine will have very little chance.'

'I must disagree. It would not be the first time that a fresh mind has suggested a solution to the insoluble. If you can help me I shall, to put it mildly, be most grateful.'

Despite the magnitude of the task, Forbes

could not resist the appeal in Lemoin's voice and eyes. He wondered at the paradoxical strength and vulnerability of the man.

'I'll try,' he said.

'Thank you.' Lemoin's voice held a world of relief. 'Now perhaps you would like some more brandy?'

AS on so many occasions before, sometimes when the nature of his work made his safety a matter for conjecture, Carol had lain awake awaiting her husband's return.

When he opened the bedroom door, however, she was asleep, breathing evenly and deeply, her mouth curled very slightly into a smile which she could never quite hide, but which he always took to be evidence of the pleasantness of her dreams. Forbes walked softly to the bed and kissed her gently. Slowly her eyes opened and her arms appeared from beneath the sheets. Then, a small bundle of scented warmth, she was cuddling against the expanse of his chest. For a while John's whole world was confined to the limits of the room.

Finally, Carol said: 'Did you see Lemoin?'

'Yes.' Perched on the side of the bed, he poured out the story.

Fascinated, Carol forgot to interrupt. 'Poor, poor man,' she said, when he had finished.

'Yes,' Forbes said. 'I think he deserves far better than that.'

'Me too. What are we going to do about him?'

'I just don't know. If you could only have seen the hopelessness in his eyes. Once or twice I felt the ridiculous desire to reach out and pat him. I might have done so, only I had the absurd conviction that he would have licked my hand in gratitude, like some great dog thankful for a kind word.' Forbes stood up with a sigh. 'Anyway, it's late. We'll talk about it in the morning.'

They discussed it in fact for several days, but at the end of that time were no nearer a solution than at the beginning. Carol displayed considerable ingenuity in discovering obscure occupations to tax Lemoin's abilities, but when they were communicated to him it was found that he had already mastered them or was confident of his ability to do so with little difficulty.

The problem remained unsolved until, quite by chance, Forbes hit upon an idea that sent him into transports of secret glee.

THE GENIUS AND THE LADY

He had arrived home one evening to find Carol glowing with pleasure. 'Guess what?' she asked.

'Tell me.'

'We're going to the theatre to-morrow.'

'Excellent.'

'Yes. Elizabeth Banford has some tickets and she wants us to make up a foursome.'

'Elizabeth Banford? Not Frigid Liz!'

'That's unkind. There is nothing wrong with Elizabeth.'

'Nothing that a heat-wave wouldn't cure.'

Like most eligible bachelors who moved in the circle of her radiance, Forbes had at one time been greatly attracted to the beautiful Elizabeth, but, like the others, he had found her unapproachable, an unworldly nymph of the look-but-do-not-touch variety. It was Elizabeth's misfortune that whilst she was capable of arousing the warmest feelings in men she had never evinced any promise of being able to return their ardour. John's vanity had suffered badly in the encounter, and the memory still rankled.

'Anyway,' said his wife, 'I think she's perfectly charming.'

'I couldn't agree more, dear.' Then, as the thought occurred to him: 'I promised to see Lemoin to-morrow to report progress. Perhaps you'll pick me up at the Club.'

AT six o'clock the following evening Forbes was talking to Lemoin on the steps of that venerable establishment when Elizabeth's superb limousine, with her current escort and Carol as passengers, drew up on the far side of the street. Forbes shook hands with Lemoin and walked over to the car.

'Was that Lemoin?' asked his wife.

'Yes.'

'Definitely not a lady's man,' Carol pronounced. 'He is most remarkably ugly.'

'Like a giant gnome,' said Elizabeth.

'I'm glad you two think so,' said Forbes. 'I was beginning to wonder if I was mistaken.'

Elizabeth introduced him to her escort, a moony-eyed, bewitched young man, already showing the first signs of frustration. She drove to the theatre with all her customary cold-blooded recklessness, a sort of intuitive skill that played mayhem with the highway code. As they skimmed wildly through the streets an idea was forming at the back of John's mind—an idea that promised to solve the problem of Lemoin and, John realised

gleefully, afford him the opportunity of repaying Elizabeth in some measure for her callous treatment of his youthful affections.

Enchanted by the idea, he became very preoccupied. His wife, who knew rather more about his association with Elizabeth than he dreamed, attributed his silence to the fact that he was still fascinated by her, and, as a result, enjoyed little spasms of jealousy, which, pleasurable because they were not seriously entertained, completely made her evening.

Later, when they had parted from Elizabeth and her thwarted escort, Forbes announced complacently: 'I think I have it.'

'Have what?'

'An answer to the problem of Lemoin.'

'So that's why you've been so quiet all evening!'

'Yes.'

'But I thought—'

'What?'

'Oh, nothing.' Carol felt guilty and just a little disappointed that her suspicions had been unfounded. 'Well, tell me about it,' she said.

'Not so fast, my sweet. I'm not sure yet whether it will work.'

Carol, agog with curiosity, was not prepared to show the fact. 'Keep your little secret then,' she said, casually.

DINING with Lemoin the following day, Forbes lost no time in putting forward his scheme. 'Pierre,' he said, 'have you ever been in love?'

The great head jerked in astonishment. 'I've never had that pleasure.' Lemoin appeared thoughtful. 'I suppose you might say that I have led a very sheltered existence so far as the fair sex is concerned.'

'How do you get along with them?' Forbes asked anxiously.

'Reasonably well, I suppose, although I don't believe they find me attractive. Just the opposite, I should say.'

'That's what my wife said!' Forbes exclaimed. 'She said you were most remarkably ugly.'

'Did she, indeed!' Lemoin was delighted.

John coloured. 'I'm sorry, Pierre. That was tactless.'

'Do not give it a thought. It is reassuring to find that in one respect at least I am not considered perfect.' Lemoin's eyes were suddenly alert. He stared at Forbes quizzically for a moment and then threw back his head

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and roared with laughter. 'I've got it!' he exclaimed. 'You think that if I pay court to a beautiful woman I will at last find an insurmountable obstacle?' He grinned widely. 'John, you're a genius!'

Forbes waved a deprecating hand. 'That's the general idea,' he said ambiguously, 'but not just any beautiful woman. I have in mind one particularly ravishing creature of my acquaintance whose aim in life is to oppose the propagation of the human species. You won't stand a chance with her,' he added confidently.

'Most reassuring,' said Lemoin, still helpless with merriment. Suddenly, he became serious. 'If, as you say, I don't stand a chance—and I have no reason to disagree with you—then I think you really have hit on something. I gather that the lady in question possesses qualities that ensure the success of the scheme?'

'You'll see,' Forbes chuckled. 'In fact, I have arranged for you to meet her this evening. I have also taken the liberty of booking a couple of seats at a show for you. There is an excellent florist's near by, and I remember that Elizabeth had an inordinate and revolting passion for chocolates, which are also readily procurable in the vicinity.'

As he had promised, Forbes carried out the introduction, and Lemoin, greatly chastened by his acquaintance with the frigid Elizabeth, was shortly being whisked through the streets, eventually to reach the theatre miraculously and thankfully alive.

Forbes, with the glow resulting from the knowledge of a job well done, wended his way gaily homewards, and spent the rest of the evening grinning smugly to himself, greatly to Carol's annoyance.

DURING the ensuing week Forbes and Lemoin met regularly to discuss progress. As time passed, Lemoin became visibly exultant. 'It's working,' he said on one occasion. 'I believe Elizabeth is beginning to hate the sight of me.'

A month later, Lemoin was overjoyed. 'She has threatened to call in the police if I don't leave her alone.' His eyes were clear, all sign of the old sadness gone. He had, it seemed, found his vocation.

For several weeks thereafter, Forbes saw little of Lemoin, who was now working unceasingly in an effort to thaw out Elizabeth's

heart. Carol, believing that failure had overtaken the scheme, thought it wiser to consider the subject closed. For his part, John felt that matters were now progressing well enough for the facts to be placed before his wife, and made his way homewards one evening happily anticipating the fruits of victory.

He was whistling as he stepped from the lift. The tune died on his lips as, stunned, he felt icy fingers of foreboding clutch at his heart. Elizabeth was in conversation with Carol at the door of the flat. But this was not the Elizabeth he knew. Gone the frigid icicle, the unapproachable. Her eyes were sparkling and dewy, her lips soft and tremulous. To John's amazed eyes her body seemed to quiver and glow with eager womanhood. When she spoke, her voice epitomised warmth and held the promise of unlimited love. 'Hello, John.'

Forbes could only stare.

'Elizabeth has a surprise for you,' said Carol.

'Really?' he replied stiffly.

'I'm to be married!' Elizabeth exclaimed, proud and starry-eyed.

Stricken, John placed an unsteady hand against the wall.

'What on earth is the matter?' cried Carol, springing to his side in consternation.

Slowly, the colour trickled back into his cheeks. 'I felt a bit light-headed for a moment—been working too hard,' he whispered. He stared at Elizabeth, trying to husband enough strength to form the question that tortured him. 'Who's the lucky man?' he managed at last.

'Pierre.'

John felt the blood drain from his face again.

'Isn't it wonderful?' asked his wife, watching him suspiciously.

'Yes, I'm sure it is,' he murmured automatically. 'I wish you every happiness, Elizabeth.'

'Thank you, John.' She leaned forward to kiss him, her lips like fire on his cheek. He had always thought that to kiss Elizabeth would be to die by freezing.

'I must run along now,' she said, 'I'm having dinner with Pierre.' She turned to kiss Carol, and then, with a cheery wave, was waltzing towards the lift.

In a dream John followed his wife into the flat. Sinking into a chair, he covered his face with his hands and groaned aloud. After a little while he became aware of a dainty foot

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tapping an impatient rhythm on the carpet.

'Since when,' said Carol, her arms folded grimly, 'have you taken to fainting from overwork?'

Forbes stared dumbly.

'Well,' she said, increasing the tempo of her tapping, 'tell me about it.'

Haltingly, John told her the story, feeling smaller and smaller as he had to explain his own part in the affair.

'You fool,' she said, when he had finished. 'You utter fool!'

'Hold on a minute,' he protested, 'how was to know she would fall for him?'

Carol was almost hopping with impatience and rage. 'Don't you know anything at all about women?'

John was becoming steadily all too aware of the slightness of his knowledge. 'The fault isn't all mine,' he said evasively. 'You put the idea into my head when you confirmed how ugly Pierre was. Even Elizabeth said he was like a giant gnome. I never thought for a moment that she would find him attractive.'

His wife glared at him witheringly. 'Do you think his looks would matter in the slightest to a woman of Elizabeth's calibre? Surely you don't imagine that I married you for your classical profile?'

'I was always under the illusion that that had something to do with it,' John retorted.

'Of course it did, you idiot, but I wouldn't have considered you for a moment if that had been your only commendation. I thought you were good and kind—I even thought you had brains. It seems I was mistaken.' Suddenly and unpredictably she burst into tears. 'I'm married to a moron,' she wailed.

John gestured helplessly. 'Look, I know how you feel, but I assure you I'm not exactly consumed with delight myself.'

'Aren't you, indeed! And how do you think poor Elizabeth is going to feel when she finds out that Pierre doesn't care a fig for her?' The anger drained from Carol's face. 'She loves him, John,' she said softly, dabbing at her eyes with a diminutive handkerchief.

'I know, I know.'

Seeing his misery, Carol relented a little. 'I'm sorry. I didn't mean to fly off the handle, but if only you'd told me what you were up to.'

'I know, dear, but I was so sure I had hit upon the answer.'

Carol considered for a moment. 'You are not entirely to blame. No one could have

anticipated Elizabeth's reaction. I suppose she found him a refreshing change from the handsome, callow young men she has been accustomed to.'

Forbes flinched.

'I must say that falling in love has worked wonders for her,' Carol went on wonderingly. 'She is a different and much nicer person altogether.'

'That is what troubles me,' said John, 'if it had been the old Elizabeth I wouldn't have cared a damn, but for the first time since I've known the girl I really like her.'

'Love is a risky thing to fool about with,' said Carol. 'There is no telling what strange and powerful forces we may unloose.'

John considered the wisdom of this for a moment. 'I must see Lemoin as soon as possible,' he said. 'This must have broken him.'

'Serves him right,' Carol remarked unsympathetically. 'Anyway, I've invited them both to dinner to-morrow. You will see him soon enough.'

The prospect was not pleasing.

NEXT day, Carol was making final adjustments to the dinner-table whilst John paced the floor, pausing from time to time to scowl at his reflection in a mirror. The tension mounted as the clock ticked away the relentless seconds. When at last the doorbell rang, husband and wife stared at each other in apprehension.

'I'll answer it,' said John finally. He made his way reluctantly across the room and opened the door.

Elizabeth entered, obviously with her head still in the clouds, and then Lemoin's great bulk filled the doorway. His wide mouth was wreathed in smiles, his eyes danced with happiness. Finding himself once again face to face with the inexplicable, John could only stare. Lemoin had been happy when the plan was working well, but it was nothing to the joy that infected him now.

John's shocked gaze met his wife's questioningly. Carol shrugged slightly and shook her head.

Lemoin advanced with outstretched hand. 'My dear John,' he beamed, 'it is good to see you again.' He turned to face Carol. 'I have been looking forward to this meeting. You are indeed far more beautiful than I had heard.'

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Carol was delighted. 'Thank you.'

John realised that she had forgotten Lemoin's ugliness and was already falling under his spell.

'John darling, will you pour some drinks?' she asked bemusedly.

'Of course.'

Carol noticed that he helped himself to an outsized brandy.

An embarrassed silence reigned. Carol looked to her husband for guidance, but he was inarticulate, bewildered by the sudden upheaval of his rational world. She raised her glass and waved it vaguely in the direction of Elizabeth and Lemoin. 'To your happiness,' she said, a little uncertain whether that was the right thing to say in the circumstances.

They smiled back at her.

John raised his glass, smiled oafishly, and drank.

'Now,' said Carol, with a meaning glance at her husband, 'perhaps Elizabeth will talk to me while I prepare dinner.'

Together, the two women disappeared into the kitchen. As soon as the door had closed behind them, John set down his glass. 'Well,' he demanded, 'what happened?'

Lemoin smiled happily and seated himself. 'It's quite a story,' he said, 'but a happy one.' He beamed complacently. 'At first everything went beautifully. Elizabeth paid no heed to my importunate attentions.' He grinned wickedly at Forbes. 'I became more and more confident of success, exulting every time she snubbed me. I was, in fact, so confident that I would not be taken seriously that I proposed marriage on a number of occasions. You can imagine the reception I received. Then, a week ago, we met in the park—quite by chance as it happened. The setting was perfect. An amorous breeze flirted softly with the trees, the air was heady with the smell of flowers. With practised eloquence, and perhaps for the sixth or seventh time, I pleaded my cause. And then, before I knew what was happening, she was in my arms.'

He laughed shortly. 'I had asked for it, I must say. She clung as light and as adhering as thistledown. I was completely shattered. I tried to explain—to tell her I did not love her—but all the time she was whispering endearments. When at last the opportunity arose, I found that I could not do it—she seemed suddenly so alive and, for the first time, very vulnerable.'

Lemoin paused, staring into space.

'Go on,' said John impatiently. 'What happened then?'

'Well, I made some sort of excuse and managed to get away. I spent the rest of the day in solitary misery, not knowing what to do for the best. My own worries seemed insignificant—not to be compared with the tragedy that would befall should Elizabeth discover the truth. At first I toyed with the idea of remaining silent and seeing the thing through, but I knew that sooner or later she would realise that I was not in love with her. Then I knew that the only thing to do was to tell her the whole story, but I'm afraid I shied away from the prospect, unable to face her disillusionment and condemnation. Finally, I decided to fade from the scene without explanation—one of my minor accomplishments, you will remember. This at least, I thought, would save her pride—she would always have the consolation of inventing flattering reasons for my disappearance.'

Lemoin sipped slowly and meditatively at his drink while John seethed with impatience. 'Not a very courageous decision,' Lemoin continued, 'but one which I proceeded to put into operation at once. I closed down the house and took a train for Dover. During the journey my mind was in a turmoil, a condition that was replaced as London receded further into the distance by an unaccountable sense of loss. I tried to analyse this feeling, but with no success, and for the first time in my life was utterly confused. At first I thought that I regretted leaving my home and its treasures, or London and the friends I had made there. I was established in an obscure little hotel in Paris before I was forced into an admission of the truth.'

A massive innocence and awe seemed to light Lemoin's features.

'Elizabeth's face kept coming before me in all its love and tenderness, and I discovered a great hunger in my heart—the need to hold her in my arms again, to hear her voice, to smell the fragrance of her hair.'

As he spoke, Lemoin's voice had become immensely tender. 'I took the first available plane back to London. I need not dwell upon the sweetness of that reunion, except to say that it was the most wonderful experience of my life.'

John stared at him speechlessly, relieved to find that the tragedy he had feared had been averted, but unable to explain Lemoin's great

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contentment. 'But,' he said, 'the success of our plan hinged upon the supposition that Elizabeth would never consider you favourably.'

Lemoine chuckled, a deep roar of sound that rumbled from the depths of his great chest. 'It is really very simple. As you can imagine, I was still obsessed with the need for intellectual fulfilment, and love, or so it seemed to me, was capable only of animal expression. And yet, strangely, I was content. I attributed this to the fact that I had never loved or been loved before, and that the mere act of loving was in itself a fulfilment. That, I thought, had been my need all along—it had taken the unselfishness of love to make me forget my discontent. But that was only part of the truth.'

'For heaven's sake,' said John, 'get to the point.'

'Don't you understand?'

John shook his head dumbly.

'Your plan did not misfire altogether, although it reached a rather different conclusion from the one you anticipated.' Lemoine's eyes twinkled. 'I could not explain Elizabeth's sudden change of heart—why she had suddenly grown to care for me.'

He paused, and his mind seemed to be far away, pondering upon the mysteries of the imponderable. 'I had discovered, John, the infinite complexity and unpredictability of woman, and I simply could not begin to explain it.'

He looked infinitely wise when he spoke again. 'I hope I never shall.'

The Lion and the Unicorn

Some Curious Heraldic Supporters

H. T. KIRBY

THE lion and the unicorn, as we all know, play the part of 'supporters' to our own Royal Arms, but fewer of us may be aware from what a wide field the creatures which support other arms have been drawn. Even the most liberally-minded zoologist would, we feel, shudder at some of the specimens which have been used for this purpose. At one time the use of supporters was restricted to the peerage, but this seems to have gone by the board, for not only are they used by people of lesser estate, but, paradoxically enough, are allowed to grace quite impersonal coats, such as those of cities, corporations, institutions, and the like. Thus does heraldry change!

As might be supposed, the lion easily leads the field as regards animals, and, although often paired with his own kind, he is, on occasion, furnished with some very queer associ-

ates. Thus, for instance, the family of Allendale display both a lion and a bull; that of Amphill a lion and an heraldic antelope; Ashtown a lion and a stag, whilst the horse, too, frequently collaborates with his ancient enemy. But it does seem rather a drop in the social scale when the King of Beasts has to share his task with the dunhill cock, as in the case of Castlemaine, or with an otter, though even this is better than the company of that curiously-ugly mythical creature known as the sea-dog. A mermaid, if equally mythical, makes an attractive, if a singularly unhelpful, companion. After all, what with one hand holding a comb to maintain the sleek beauty of her long tresses, and the other a mirror in which to survey her own charms, her value as a supporter is almost negligible! The fox and the lion have been so often connected in fable

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that it causes no surprise to find them allied in heraldic duties, but what a singularly unpleasant colleague the 'fretful porcupine' must be. Yet it faces the lion, quills erect, in the arms of De L'Isle and Dudley. And we cannot feel that Dundas was happy in the choice of an elephant, for its tubular limbs, excellent enough for trampling an adversary, seem very ill-adapted to help support a shield.

SINCE heraldry rather than zoology is the prime consideration, it might be remarked that animals can either be shown as 'proper'—that is, as nature made them—or in any of the tinctures allowed by this science. Further they can be, and often are, parti-coloured, so that, for instance, a unicorn may be of one colour below its waist-line, and quite a different one from thence upwards. Generally, too, tongue and claws are of a contrasting hue, and this adds much to the decorative effect. If, as well, the shield is 'differenced' in any way, as by a 'label', this is also borne by the supporters.

It comes as a shock to a nation of dog-lovers to find how little this animal is regarded by the herald. Apart from the talbot—a species of lumbering hound—and the familiar greyhound, the older schools admitted none other. Of more recent times others have been recognised, and amongst these are the Irish wolf-dog of Dartrey, coupled, curiously enough, with an elk, and the pair of Irish wolf-hounds used by Hemphill. Further twins are the collie-dogs of Loreburn and the mastiffs of Lovelace. Yarborough yokes a bay horse with a water-spaniel, whilst Hunter-Blair joins a 'dog of chase', whatever that may be, with an antelope. Forbes chooses two quite imposing and noble bloodhounds.

The ancient chase of the wild red deer is much remembered, and varieties of the buck, the stag, antelope, hart, and hind, as well as the more remote reindeer, elk, and sambar, appear frequently. The wolf, once common in this country, but now unknown, is quite a favourite, though exactly why De la Warr shows this animal as 'coward'—that is, with its tail between its legs, is unknown. Can it be due to its strange alliance with the rather fearsome-looking cockatrice?

Most unusual amongst supporters must be those chosen by Kitchener, for his arms are sustained by the camel and thegnu! Hardinge of Penshurst, however, runs him close, and his

brown bear and Bengal tiger seem a most unfriendly combination. Nor can the stag feel really at home with the tiger, yet they are associated in the arms of Glenconner. And what can we say of the elephant and the mermaid? If ever beauty married bulk this was the occasion—yet Caledon shows such a union.

HERALDRY often plays strange tricks with an animal's just proportions, for naturally supporters have to be, more or less, of a size. Thus, when the salmon and the seal act in concert, either the seal must be much reduced in size, or the salmon increased to the seal's stature. So it is with the lion and the otter in the case of Coleridge, and the owl and the eagle in Selby's arms.

It is quite intriguing, too, to find how hostile heraldry is to sex-equality, for it has little real use for the female of the species. It simply revels in the virility of the male, and never can its ram be mistaken for a ewe, or its bull for the emasculated ox!

Fortunately there is less dispute about posture, for, to support a shield adequately, the only possible positions are the 'rampant', where one hind leg remains on the ground, or the 'salient', where both rear limbs cling to *terra firma*. With birds, it is even more easy, for one of the two legs available must always be set on earth. Yet within these limits there is scope enough, and the herald can always make much play with the mouth or the tail, both being free from specific duties. Thus the stork can, and frequently does, have a snake or eel in its mouth; the panther, for some reason known only to heralds, can, as in the family of Beaufort, have flames 'issuant' from its mouth, and the lion, coupled with the reindeer in the arms of Bath, may have its tail in a knot, or 'nowed' as it is called. Nor are extra heads vetoed, witness the double-headed eagle favoured by Waleran. Swans, too, are often 'gorged', as is our own unicorn, with a coronet—in other words, their neck is encircled with such an ornament. And many animals, too, are actually crowned, though some look so unhappy that one feels that 'uneasy lies the head that wears a crown' applies not only to kings. Occasionally a horse is 'caparisoned' very gaily, or it is 'bridled and saddled', as in Derwent, according to some whim of the family concerned.

Birds are well represented, the Cornish

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chough being a great favourite, with its larger relative, the raven, also much in demand. The 'popinjay' normally hides the identity of the parrot, but it is the lordly eagle which holds the pride of place—as does the lion among mammals—although it is run very close by the tiny 'martlet', that species of martin in which fluffy feathers replace legs. Less frequently encountered are the mallard, the dove, woodpecker, heron, and pelican. The peacock is too busy being in 'its pride'—with its tail fully expanded—to make a good supporter; it is also difficult for the pelican to

support anything, for she is so often shown in 'her piety'—that is, feeding her young with blood pecked from her own breast—that other duties are barred.

But even the non-heraldically-minded will allow that heraldry alone has kept alive that mysterious world in which dragons belch fire; the phoenix indulges in an orgy of bonfires; the hydra carries seven heads with ease and dignity; Pegasus thinks little of the jet aeroplane, and the 'yale' waggles its horns as it will. For this alone it merits the praise of all right-thinking people!

British Secret Societies of the Past

LEWIS SPENCE

THE romantic historian will seek in vain for traces of secret societies of the more theatrical kind in the social annals of Britain. Our insular mentality, frank and forthright, contemns such mummeries, and has always instinctively avoided the mysterious as savouring of the thespian and the absurd. But confraternities have appeared in our island from age to age which may be described as of a semi-secret nature, unfriendly to blood-curdling ritual and affrighting compacts. The majority of them, indeed, have displayed that rather wistful desire of the skilled artificer to keep the mysteries of his occupation from the prying eyes of the outsider, as well as that clubbable instinct which inspires men who share craft traditions.

The one and only vestige in British record of what might be classed as an authentic secret brotherhood is that which seems to reveal the existence early in our history of an arcane military and religious body, the intention of which was to frustrate the settlement of large numbers of Anglo-Saxon invaders on British soil. About the year 467, or some twenty years after the first invasion of the

Saxon tribes, Aurelius Ambrosius, a British noble of Roman descent, seems to have formed a military association for the purpose of stemming the tide of Saxon conquest. This, it has been suggested, adopted as its divine and spiritual leader the British god Arthur, and ancient Welsh literature holds more than one intimation that he was regarded as the central figure of a cult or society having mystical and patriotic associations. But much research will have to be expended on the theory before it can be entertained by the serious historian as worthy of acceptance.

LEAVING these primitive and shadowy uncertainties behind us, we tread more substantial ground when we come to consider what is known of early fraternities in Britain connected with certain crafts or occupations. Such a brotherhood was that associated with the craft of building, which seems to have been fully established in England by the reign of Henry VI. Before that period, this type of brotherhood had a fairly long history of development in Germany, where its adherents

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were known as the *Steinmetzen*, and in France, where it flourished as the *Compagnonnages*. It was actually a guild or trade union of operative masons who were desirous of retaining the mysteries or secrets of the trade within the bounds of its skilled membership. In doing so, it managed at the same time to infuse into its ritual and tradition a good deal of legendary matter concerning the building of King Solomon's temple at Jerusalem and the various personages who were supposed to have taken part in the erection of that famous edifice.

This interesting movement naturally established its principal lodges in those localities where large numbers of operative masons were employed in the erection of the great cathedrals and abbeys both on the Continent and in Britain. These lodges, in the course of time, developed rites of initiation and brotherhood and adopted secret signs and passwords by which the members might become known to one another.

A rather obviously artificial legend states that in the year 1314 King Robert the Bruce of Scotland formed a union between the Knights Templars and one of the guilds of operative masons situated at the famous centre of Kilwinning in Ayrshire, which has become the mother-lodge of Scottish Freemasonry. The claim has been made that this new and united body was to some extent the heir of the secret traditions of the Knights Templars, with all their mystical and semi-oriental ideas and ritual, a claim which seems still to be upheld in some quarters, but which can only be regarded as hypothetical.

But that some of the vestiges of Eastern legend found their way into the tradition of the Scottish operative masons is scarcely to be gainsaid. It is curious to reflect that in 1446, the period at which the beautiful chapel of Roslin, not far from Edinburgh, was founded, operative masons from many different parts of Europe appear to have been engaged in its construction, and the statement has been handed down that no fewer than 'fourteen nations' co-operated in the work.

The legend associated with the famous Prentice Pillar at Roslin, which is said to have been fashioned by a youthful stonemason who outstripped his master in the art of masonic sculpture, and who was slain by his exasperated senior in a fit of homicidal jealousy, resembles in so many of its details the story of the assassination of Hiram Abiff,

who was traditionally responsible for the plan of King Solomon's temple, that it may have had its origin in the Hebrew legend. Indeed, it is alluded to in that fantastic work *The Secret Commonwealth*, written in 1691 by the Rev. Robert Kirk, the minister of Aberfoyle, which makes it clear that the story was well known in Scotland, while it is associated with more than one English cathedral. It seems far from improbable that a lodge of operative stonemasons actually existed at Roslin in the middle of the 15th century and that the initiation of apprentices and master masons took place there.

LET us now consider a secret society of a very different type, one which, although it was designed to cloak the mysteries of an 'occupation', was sponsored not by grave and respectable journeymen, but by the outcast rabble of the community. The fraternity of Abraham Men, otherwise known as Upright Men, which made its first appearance in Britain during the reign of Elizabeth, and which has been so entertainingly described in the pages of Bamfylde Moore Carew, Dekker, and Meriton Latroon, was a confederacy of broken men, disbanded soldiers, peasants dispossessed of their holdings, runagate apprentices, loose women, and indeed of all the dregs of human rascality and misfortune. For several generations it terrorised English society. Composed mainly of beggars, sometimes pitiful and harmless, but also of ruffianly bullies and braggarts, it rapidly assumed the proportions of a national scourge. This society of outcasts, or mumpers, had its leaders, or 'kings', its recognised degrees, its places of stated assembly, its ritual of initiation, and its own cant or jargon.

Within its ranks various methods of earning a dubious living were practised. The 'prigger of prancers' was a denomination which faintly disguised the horse-thief. The 'hooker', or 'angler', was the knave who pinched linen from household washing-greens by the aid of a long crooked stick, or who by the same means filched pies and other viands through the bars of a pantry window. The Abraham Man proper was that outstanding figure in Elizabethan literature who feigned madness. The 'counterfeit crank' was he who staged an epileptic seizure when charitable company passed him on the highway and whose foaming at the mouth was produced by

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a morsel of soap. The 'dummerer' was a beggar who feigned dumbness.

These vagabond types had their female counterparts. The 'basket' was a woman pedlar who vended basket-work and pottery as a cloak for petty theft. 'Walking mort's' and 'daxies' were the wives or companions of the Upright Men and their active confederates in all kinds of rascality. The 'dell' was a girl not as yet attached to a male member of the fraternity, while a 'kynching mort' was an even younger female apprentice to a life disreputable.

Meriton Latroon, an adventurer of education who attached himself to a band of the Upright Men, tells us that the beggar-folk among them devised false wounds on their limbs by mixing the rust of old iron with unslaked lime and soap, spreading the mixture on a leather strap which they then bound to leg or arm. When, after an interval, the strap was removed, a grisly-looking 'wound' appeared. But feigned insanity was the part most generally assumed by the male members of the fraternity, and from this there developed the type of Mad Tom of Bedlam, his hair wreathed in straw or leaves and with hunting-horn by his side, seeming like a rather shabby Bacchus—the whole a figure immortalised by the famous verses of an anonymous poet of rare merit who sang sympathetically of his 'furious fancies'.

This sodality of trampers or mumpers affected a ceremony of initiation which has been happily described by Dekker, who, by the merest chance, witnessed its observance in a forest glade. The presiding Upright Man, after questioning the rascally novice and assuring himself that he could boast of a record sufficiently lurid to qualify for membership in the fraternity, commanded the 'crank cuffin', or would-be brother, to kneel before him, whereupon he poured a gage, or measure, of ale over the neophyte's head, pronouncing at the same time the formula which made him a full member of the band in good standing: 'I do stall thee to be rogue by virtue of this Sovereign English liquor, so that henceforth it shall be lawful for thee to cant, to be a vagabond, and beg.' The cuffin then took an oath of obedience to the order and was given a nickname by which he was afterwards known to his fellows.

The cant or slang speech employed by the Upright Men, some of which is still to be found in the vocabulary of tinkers and tramps

to-day, is now known to be an admixture of Celtic, Low German, French, and Old English, with here and there a Romany expression and a few words of Latin. Such words as 'booze', 'crank' (sick), and 'dell' appear to be of Flemish or Dutch origin, 'pannam', for bread, may come out of France, while 'bung', a purse, is probably Cornish. But the net of this lingua franca was widespread, as etymological research has revealed. So far as the tricks practised by the members of this lost legion are concerned, the best authority seems to be Reginald Scot, who in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) has faithfully summarised its legerdemain and hocus-pocus. The most notable annalist of its affairs in general, however, was Bamsfylde Moore Carew, who flourished in the days of good Queen Anne, joined the canting crew in his youth, and latterly became its acknowledged 'king', as he recounts in his famous biography.

AS far removed in its principles and intentions from the society of Upright Men as pole is from pole was that extraordinary secret fraternity of ploughmen which flourished in the north-east of Scotland, and chiefly in the district of Buchan, within the memory of many people still living, and which was known as the Horsemen's Society. In 1890 a ploughman summoned one of his fellow-workers in the Sheriff Court at Aberdeen for the return of a pound-note which he had given him to reveal the 'Horseman's word', the secret password of the association, alleging that the man had accepted the money but had later refused to divulge the phrase.

Private research has brought to light the facts concerning this strange brotherhood, which was composed of ploughmen and was confined to that craft alone. It met in secret, usually in the loft of some farm, where those who desired to join its ranks were duly initiated into its mysteries. The novice must bring with him a loaf of bread, a candle, and a bottle of whisky. He was blindfolded and sworn to secrecy and was closely cross-examined as to his skill as a ploughman. Then he was commanded to 'shake hands with the Auld Chiel'—that is, with the Devil. A hairy paw, usually a hare's foot mounted on the end of a stick, met the hand of the blindfold man and the secret word of the fraternity was passed on to him. This is now known to have consisted of the simple words 'Both in

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One', and signified the complete unity and harmony which is supposed to exist between the ploughman and the horse with which he works. A secret sign was then given him by which he could recognise other members of the society. Lastly he was instructed in the process of extracting the venom of dead toads for magical purposes according to an ancient recipe, although what benefit he could derive from this remains unknown. Possibly it was merely intended to import into the proceedings a dash of horrid mystery and thus make them more impressive.

The Horseman's word was said to possess magical potencies. When uttered, it could compel a horse to come immediately to him who pronounced it, no matter from what distance. It could set fire to a pair of horses without doing them any injury. It could cause a plough to work automatically without being horse-drawn. It is absurd to believe that any ploughman in the north-east of Scotland of half-a-century ago credited such nonsense, although at a much earlier period it may have been acceptable to his forefathers. Indeed, it is obvious that the ritual and floating tradition associated with this society were derived from the ancient system of witchcraft formerly current in the neighbourhood and later drafted into the formulæ of what was merely a friendly society to endow it with that

air of mystery so dear to the associates of fraternal sodalities, whether they be composed of educated or simple folk. Certainly every circumstance connected with the Horsemen's Society is eloquent of the fact that its mummeries were derived from ancient witch-belief as formerly known and practised in the area of its existence.

A similar secret society established in the same part of the country was the Millers' Society, which likewise had its ritual and mysterious password, the terms of which, however, have never been discovered. The meetings of this craft were, it is said, held by night in a disused kiln which was usually shunned in the daytime by those dwelling in the vicinity and which was said to be haunted by a supernatural being known as 'the Kiln Carle', a demonic creature possessing satanic attributes. The miller who had been initiated into its circle was thought to possess magical efficiency in the working of his mill and was thus safe from the malice of the fairy folk, who were regarded as the chief agents in retarding the successful grinding of cereals. But the Millers' Society does not seem to have survived until so late a period as that of the Horsemen, owing probably to the introduction of modern mechanical appliances too complicated to invite the malignant attentions of the tricky elves.

Nicht Sang

*I canna thole my love awa,
I canna bide my love awa,
I canna sleep till licht o' daw
When aa the time my love's awa.*

*I turn to watch the restless moon,
To catch the staur's licht winkan doun
Like peeran een owre aa the toun
That tell me noo the day is soon.*

*I hear the houlet owre the trees;
Clear his hert's cry swells and dies—
But my ears gang deif, my een tell lies,
For she is aa my ain mind sees.*

*Oh, end the time my love's awa,
Oh, brek the hours my love's awa,
Oh, droun the staur's wi' licht o' daw—
Nae mair I'll hae my love awa!*

GEORGE TODD.



A Great Heart To Go On

MARIGOLD ARMITAGE

THIS is not a story, but a confession, and, above all, a tribute. I would like it to be an apology, but as I murdered the person to whom the apology is due that isn't possible—I can only hope, as I have hoped now for a long time, that he never realised what I had done to him.

He was an undersized, badly-made black horse with an extravagantly beautiful and intelligent head, a long, arrogant, high-crested neck, and a superb sloping poem of a shoulder. Behind the shoulder he just dwindled away, and towards the end of each hunting season he began to look like an ailing whippet. He stood a bare fifteen hands in his shoes, and he was the biggest horse that courage can make, which is big enough for anything. The strange thing was that his courage actually seemed to make him big physically. 'You'd look at him there in the box, now,' Mick Herlihy said to me, 'and you'd say he was a rat of a pony, and then you'd sit up on him and he'd give you the feel of a National horse—you'd be proud, mind you, to be there.'

I was proud, certainly, to be there. I loved and admired him enormously, and he, on his part, had a tolerant and amused affection for me, and trusted me not to hinder him in his spectacular crossing of the West Tipperary

country when hounds were running. He had a masculine distaste for any display of emotion, and, anyway, his true love was reserved entirely for the high glory of hunting. His most loving gesture towards me was to snake his lean head round and bite me smartly but carefully on the shoulder as I was getting up on him at a meet. He did it invariably, his teeth just pinching me through the thick Melton cloth, and it meant 'Now sit still up there and don't interfere, and we'll have some fun.'

At the same time as I owned the little black horse I had a pretty chestnut filly who would have delighted any horseman's eye. You couldn't fault her to look at, but it was I who had to put heart into her—ram her into her fences, swearing at her, telling her where to take off, nursing and cursing her all through a hunt. The little black horse went into his fences—double or single bank, stone-faced or slippery ones, unyielding timber or ragged, jagged wall—with unswerving gallantry, using all his heart and all his brain. The most I ever had to do was drop my hands and click to him, and even that was just from habit, because he was unstoppable in a hunt unless hounds stopped running. His attitude was that if you didn't want to ride straight and

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take on what came to you you'd better get yourself a rocking-horse and stop in the nursery.

I would give a lot now—my God, I'd give a lot—to drop my hands and click to him again; to see the neat, Araby ears flick forward until they met at the tip, as he measured his effort; to have the reins snatched through my hands to the buckle as he reached for the jump, stretching the full length of his arrogant neck; to feel his shoulder muscles knot beneath my knees as he crouched to take off—and then the cat-like pounce and lightning kick-back that reduced the most towering bank, the widest, wettest, deepest ditch, to tameness; or the soaring spread and feather-light landing that turned the wickedly threatening walls and timber into something a child had built to frighten the grown-ups.

When the filly and the little black horse were out at grass in the summer and I used to go into the long limestone pastures and call them up, the filly would come trotting to me at once, flirting her head, making burbling sounds of love. She would rest that entrancing head on my shoulder and blow gently down my neck and into my ears—but I didn't believe a word of it. She would let me down, I knew, the first time I faced her into something dirty when the season opened again—there was no shame in her at all; she was an undoubted hussy.

The little black horse never deigned to come up to me. He waited for me to go to him, not even lifting his head from the grass he was tearing with his strong, yellow teeth—only a shining dark eye swivelled sideways to make certain that I knew my place, and wasn't actually going to go away without paying my compliments to him. He would raise his wonderful keen face at the last second, as I came humbly to a stand by his shoulder, cock his ears, graciously accept his apple, and allow me to rub those ears—dusty with summer—while he ate it. Then he would give me a shattering shove with his head, which often set me flat back in the grass, smile, whisk his tail, and turn away back to his grazing, giving me my congé. He was a dedicated horse, and had no time whatever for fooling around in society.

ONCE, when I was wan and weak after 'flu, and only following hounds in the car, I lent the little black horse to Mick

Herlihy, who was a light little rat of a horse-coping fellow, kind and bold enough to be worthy of the honour, and had his own hunter laid up with a thorn. We saw the hunt away from Delany's—hounds running with a tremendous dash and cry straight away from us over the hill—and then we never saw them again for an hour and ten minutes and ten miles. The little black horse was lathered, streaked with blood from surface scratches, and very tired. He wore a self-congratulatory air of sober satisfaction, and Mick's puggy face shone above him with a sort of holy awe. 'Jesus God,' he exploded, looking in through the car window, 'that's a little horse has a great heart to go on!'

He had that, sure enough, and it was his undoing, and mine. Every time I rode him that heart carried me bang into the first flight, and kept me there. The first flight of the West Tipperary Foxhounds, at the time of which I write, consisted of Bill Ryan, the dealer; Ned Power, the trainer; Willy McCarthy, the combination of the two; and 'Flip' Ponsonby, a sort of latter-day Lucy Glitters, a satisfyingly wicked and wonderfully glamorous figure, who was said to have killed five horses and three husbands before leaving Leicestershire to marry her fourth, who was our Master, and was, in the local idiom, well able for her. They were all tough, gay, full of physical courage, warmth, and magnetism, open-handed, cold-hearted, and callous, and they all drank a lot before, during, and after hunting.

I had seen Ned break a horse down in the middle of a hunt—an old horse, who had been a good servant to him for seasons, and hand him over, hopping lame, to a lad of no consequence to lead straight off to the kennels. Ned never even loosened his girths. I had seen Bill leave a terrified young horse plunging in a ditch while he went and had a drink, because it was a silly clown of an animal and making a holy show of itself. I had seen Flip refuse to speak to her youngest son, aged ten, because his hands were cold and his pony was pulling him and he was scared, and showed it.

I had seen all this, and I ought not to have lost my head, and I did lose it. I was very young, certainly—but the question, I suppose, is not one of duration, but of depth. If you really haven't got any guts, if you can't be anyone but the person other people choose to make you—well, you aren't likely to change. Eighteen or eighty, you may as well give up.

A GREAT HEART TO GO ON

WELL, there I was—great to go, would face a horse in anywhere, ready to cut anybody down and hang them up to dry; and up from the South Limerick for a day with us came Matty Byrne, the steeplechase jockey, prepared to show us all how to cross the country—a quiet, nondescript, humorous chap, and, as Willy put it, 'No silly joke of a man to ride.' He rode like an angel. He could, it was said, lift an ass over Becher's, and when he got on to a horse he became a god. When he jumped a fence the heart began singing to watch him, and fell giddily in love with perfection. He would take any bribe to do anything on a racecourse, and at this time he was off for six weeks for pulling the bloody head off of a horse at Mallow—'Couldn't you see the horse weaving-like coming into the straight, and he fighting to be let gallop?'—which was why he had time to hunt.

The meet was a large, gay, and fashionable affair, the first draw was a certain find, the day was a grand-scenting one, and as hounds opened clamorously in covert the little black horse shuddered with a deep delight beneath me and gave an experimental rake at me to reassure himself that I could be trusted to leave his head alone. The thrusters edged their way capgily through the crowd, frowned upon by our rather pompous field-master, and then hounds were tumbling out over the big ditch at the corner. Ned summed up in a second which way they were going to swing, turned his horse in a flash, and crashed out through a very hairy place indeed, and I followed him, and settled down to ride with scratches on my face, mud in my eyes, cold air in my lungs, terror and exultation in my heart, and the great Matty Byrne galloping close on my left.

I remember nothing more of that hunt, except that it was long, straight, and fast, until there was just a small bunch of us standing still on our steaming, blowing horses before an appalling obstacle, on the far side of which hounds were checked, working madly to and fro of their own accord, whimpering with frustration. We sat still and eyed each other uneasily, and eyed the black-looking fence between us and them, and each one of us hoped in his heart that nobody would be fool enough to take it on.

It was a very high and narrow and straight-faced bank, and mostly the solid blackthorn grew so thickly along the top that it was obviously, comfortingly, unjumpable—but in one spot only it straggled and thinned, and

there the gap was reinforced by a couple of rails, low, but solid. Had they been only a little higher, it would have been impossible there also, but as it was . . . Ned ranged his sweating horse along side the bank and stood up in his stirrups and peered over it, shook his head, and came away. 'There's a grave of a dyke beyond to lep with it all—'tisn't a place for a Christian.'

Hounds were still at fault in the next field, and the Master suddenly made up his mind, wheeled his horse, and galloped back the way we had come, seeking a way round. One by one his field followed him. Bill Ryan went, Ned Power, Flip . . . I had actually turned the little black horse after them, when a hound opened suddenly, and the rest went to him and confirmed it exultantly, and they all streamed straight away from us across the far field, shouting like bells, and Matty Byrne, grinning, took hold of his big Steel Point horse and pulled him round to face the fence straight and set him alight and rode him into it. By the grace of God and the sheer bewitching power of his horsemanship, they got over, but it was a very close brush—I heard the flurry and scrambling as they disappeared, and then the loud, shocked snort of a horse who has been nearly down, and considers that too much has been asked of him.

When they came into view once more, striding on alone, Matty looked briefly over his shoulder and grinned again, and in that second the destroying madness came upon me as a dream of glory, and I faced the little black horse into it and dropped my hands, and clicked to him—asking him to do the impossible, knowing he wouldn't refuse me.

I THINK I actually heard his back break as he made his desperate, heroic lunge out across the rails and the ditch from his slippery, narrow, precarious toe-hold on the top of the ragged bank. Perhaps it was the top rail, which he hit with his hind-legs, but I knew before I had picked myself up and wiped the mud out of my eyes that what I had done was irrevocable. He wasn't fighting, and he had always fought like a wild-cat to get to his feet after a fall. He just lay huddled half in and half-out of the ditch and groaned breathily and stretched out his long neck and moved his head slowly up and down in a bewildered way, and Matty Byrne came trotting back to us with a shocked face.

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There had been a veterinary surgeon out, but nobody knew where he had got to, and it was Matty who shot the little black horse eventually, not very neatly, with a gun he had got from a local farmer, and the farmer's small boys came along to see the fun.

That was all, and it doesn't sound very terrible now I write it down. Horses do get killed hunting, and so do people, come to that, and it seems to me quite a good way to get killed, engaged in the sport of kings, the image of war. Certainly, the glory and the risk seem to even out. But there is no glory in a shabby trading on the true-hearted, and not a lot of risk involved in the betrayal of a trust.

Oh, I got one kind of glory out of it, all

right, and it used to keep me awake at night—I had at least enough conscience left for that, although for me a world had come shatteringly to its end. Once out of Eden there is no simple return—however glorious, however irresistible, however split-second short the path away from it. I have ridden many horses since then—the good and the bad ones, the clowns and the heroes, the rogues and the honest-hearted, but I have never felt the same way towards any of them, nor, I think, have any of them on their part felt the same way towards me. They hardly could, after all, because I have never been the same person. Sometimes it seems I have no heart now to go on at all.

Britain's New Forests

E. R. YARHAM

UNTIL after the First World War Britain had no definite forestry programme. Not until 1919 was the Forestry Commission constituted, with the specific aim of building up a reserve of timber. That was not until the country's meagre reserves had been depleted by 450,000 acres.

If such a programme had been inaugurated half-a-century earlier, the country would have been far better off from the point of view of timber supplies. Unfortunately war came again, with further serious inroads into the country's reserves already down to danger-level, before the full benefit of the new departure could be felt. However, some of its first plantings yielded useful stuff for the Second World War effort. Between 1939 and 1945, having benefited from the earlier experience of 1914-18, the Government ordered afforestation to continue, and up to 28,000 acres were planted by the Forestry Commission every season.

Including the former Crown Woods, trans-

ferred to the Commission in 1924, the Department has acquired about 1,900,000 acres, 62 per cent being plantable, of which approximately 875,000 acres are under plantations. Under the Dedication Scheme, financial assistance is given to private owners and Local Authorities in respect of approved works of afforestation. The Commission maintains its own nurseries and produces some 70,000,000 transplants every year for its own planting operations.

WHEN tens of millions of trees are being planted in this way, the supply of seed for the nurseries is a big problem, particularly in a country like Britain, very poorly forested, and where the establishment of various soft-wood trees has never been, with the possible exception of the larch, on a large scale until the past thirty years. Therefore importation of seed has had to be on a considerable scale. For instance, in a ten-year period the Forestry

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Commissioners planted 32,000,000 Douglas firs, one of the finest of Canadian timber trees, on various sites in England, Wales, and Scotland. All the transplants were raised from seed furnished by the Forestry Service of the Dominion through its seed-extraction plant at New Westminster, British Columbia.

Canada has played a leading part in helping to reforest Britain, and other seed has been imported from the United States, Japan, and the continent of Europe. Britain has regularly purchased much of the Sitka spruce seed produced by Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia. Seeds of the Western yellow pine, Western red cedar, lodgepole pine, Western hemlock, Western white pine, the Douglas fir (as mentioned), and of a few other species have also been bought. It is an interesting point that the seed from Canada's splendid timber trees native to the west coast areas do so well in the British Islands because the climate more closely resembles that of British Columbia than any other province in the Dominion.

With Britain's rapidly-growing coniferous plantations, the Commissioners have been able to obtain an increasing quantity of seed from the home State forests. Wherever native coniferous trees are felled—the Commission frequently purchases old stands for felling and subsequent replanting—arrangements are made for the collection of seed. Women whose husbands are employed in the State forests, and children too, are often given the job.

Picking takes place in winter. The cones of Douglas fir and spruce—better known to English children as the Christmas-tree—mature in a single season, whereas the Scots pine takes two seasons, and this is where the picker has to exercise a choice. A normal tree has three kinds of cones—the cone past maturity, with the scales wide open and the seeds scattered to the winds, which distribution takes place in the early spring; the one-year-old cone, which is small, hard, closely-shut, and shiny, in which the seeds are not fully ripe; and the two-year-old cone, about twice the size of the one-year-old, browner, and with some touch of green maybe, but with the scales still closed. Such a cone contains from 40 to 50 fertile seeds. In the spruce the wings may be five times as long as the seed itself.

The sacked cones are taken to the extraction-plant, a fixed price being paid for each sack. There they are spread out to a depth of about

four inches, turned over daily to prevent moulding, and when sufficiently air-dried they are placed in drawers with closely-meshed wire bottoms. Controlled heat from a hot-air furnace is allowed to pass up through the mesh, and after from twelve to twenty-four hours the cones open, revealing the seed. In this way Nature's increasing warmth from March to April is simulated, and by it the seeds are saved instead of being scattered haphazardly by the wind. When opened, the cones are placed in a revolving cylinder made of gauze sufficiently large-meshed to permit the seed to fall through and be caught beneath.

The emptied cones are used as fuel for the plant, and the seeds are put through a fanning-mill to clean them of extraneous material. After that, they are placed in a box-shaped machine, which is a mechanical brush, used for removing the wings from the seeds. The chaff is blown away by the fanning-machine, and the seeds may be put through three or four times to ensure perfect cleanliness. The cleaned, stripped seeds are packed into small bags, carefully labelled with the place of origin, species, and quantity, and are then sent to the nurseries.

BESIDES cones, large quantities of beech-mast and acorns, among the hardwoods, are collected as well. As many as 70,000 lb. of acorns have been gathered in a season. Generally speaking, hardwoods are not so easily established as softwoods, and a practice is made of planting them among the pines in the State forests, where soil and other conditions are suitable, so that the pines can shelter and nurse up beech, oak, and ornamental species. One difficulty is that oak and beech are susceptible to frost, and in Britain only two or three months of the year can be relied upon as being free from frost severe enough to damage young trees. Birch, a frost-resistant hardwood, and Scots pine are also used to protect hardwood transplants. Once frosted, a young beech makes no more growth in a season, but an oak may produce a second or even third flush of leaves and so overcome the effect of the frosting back.

It is planned, as time passes and a reserve of softwoods is built up in Britain, to plant more hardwoods, although it is not so easy to find suitable soils, a factor touched upon briefly earlier. Coniferous trees are nothing like so particular as to site, and many flourish

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on the sandy dunes of the seashore and on the bleak mountain sides of the Pennines, Wales, and the Highlands. Nevertheless, great care is necessary if first-class transplants are to be raised. The biggest State nurseries in Britain are around the Thetford area of East Anglia, where until after the First World War tens of thousands of acres were nothing more than derelict warrens and heaths overrun by rabbits. The largest new British forests since William the Conqueror replanted the New Forest in the south overlooking the English Channel have been established here.

At the extensive Thetford nurseries much use is made of beech and birch leaf-mould in combination with farmyard manure. The seeds are set and the young plants carefully tended, and they have to be regularly weeded throughout the growing-season. With coniferous types, the young trees are pricked out to attain sufficient strength before they are planted in permanent quarters, which takes place after two or three seasons. Rigid selection is practised and weaklings and deformed plants, known as 'culls', are rejected and burnt, only the best being set out in the woods.

The planting-season in Britain lasts from October to March, and during that time the young trees are carefully taken from the seed-bed or transplant lines, bundled into 50's or 100's according to size, packed on lorries or in trucks with their roots covered with earth, and then covered with bracken. The number of plants obtained from a pound of seed varies enormously. For instance, 70 is a fair number of trees from a pound of acorns, 300 transplants from beech. A pound of Scots pine seed yields 20,000 plants, Corsican pine 12,000 plants, and Sitka spruce up to 50,000 plants. On the average, a State nursery in Britain produces six million seedlings and a similar number of transplants annually. The total varies from season to season, due to various causes—severe winter weather, drought, sun-scorch, drying winds, poor seed, or improper sowing. A large number of experimental sowings is constantly being made and the experience of the first thirty-five years is enabling improved results to be achieved.

FOR a period of at least two seasons after planting a new forest, careful stocktaking

is necessary in order to discover losses by dying off. The dead trees have to be replaced until the young forest has become sufficiently established not to need such building up. The losses may be due to frost, which was mentioned earlier, or to the young trees not having taken. But there are other enemies of the young trees which may cause equally serious losses, among them squirrels and deer and the almost ever-present menace of forest fire. Rabbits, once an equal pest, have been almost exterminated by myxomatosis, unwelcome to the warren, but a blessing to the forester.

The grey squirrel has become a pest in Britain, so it has to be shot without compunction in young forests, as it strips the bark from the young trees. Rabbits, which once swarmed in thousands in the Brecklands of East Anglia, were formerly a menace. Now reduced to a few survivors, it remains to be seen whether they will breed an immune race, and the problem recur. Newly-forested areas must be protected with wire-netting fences. Deer have been fast increasing in numbers, and they are a trouble as well, especially when food is short. They can jump a rabbit-fence with ease, and will quickly destroy great numbers of trees by nibbling off the tops. Where these animals are particularly troublesome, a six to eight-foot-high fence is necessary.

But more menacing still is the forest fire, and at strategic points in the State forests are tall fire-towers, about 50 feet high, where watch is kept night and day during the danger season. Fire-fighters, armed with modern equipment, are ready to set out the moment they receive the alarm. Forest rangers are equipped with walkie-talkie radio so that they can summon swift aid. Carelessness on the part of the public, sparks from passing trains, the sun shining fiercely on a piece of broken glass—these are some of the causes of forest fires, and along all the main roads fire-beating brooms are put at regular intervals so that everybody can lend a hand.

Every State forest is marked off into blocks with fire-lanes between, and every forest officer is responsible for drawing up his plan of fire-fighting, and for knowing the sites of all available water supplies. Although the fire menace is not so serious as in North America, Britain's timber reserves are so meagre that every tree is precious.

Call Me Ishmael

The Story of a Film Part

JOHN GODLEY

AT the beginning of December 1953 I unexpectedly received a telephone-call at my home—Killegar, in the remote County Leitrim, Ireland—from John Huston, the American motion-picture director. He was calling from Courtown, the fine Georgian house he has rented in County Kildare, to say that he wanted to meet me. We discovered we were both going to Navan races the following Saturday, and the racecourse seemed to Huston as good a place as any other to discuss his business. He gave me no idea what this might be—I am a writer and farmer, and had no connection of any kind with the movies—though the wild hope came to me that he had read and was interested in something I'd written. Our two previous meetings had been social and accidental—at a house-party at Luggala, the fabulous home in County Wicklow of Oonagh, Lady Oranmore and Browne, and at a dinner-party at the Russell Hotel in Dublin—and at neither had we exchanged more than a sentence or two.

It was a wonderful, clear, bright blue Irish day when I set out for Navan, which is a small market-town, fifty-seven miles away on the main road to Dublin. I had a puncture on the way—I was driving an old Ford V-8 station wagon—so I arrived with oily hands just after the second race. I headed for the bar, to restore my good spirits, and immediately saw Huston heading in the same direction from a different angle. We met at the bar entrance. He was wearing a tweed cap, narrow cavalry-twill trousers, a brown tweed riding-jacket, and an undisguised black eye, and he was accompanied by his personal secretary, Lorry Sherwood, who is one quarter American Indian and who was clad principally in a bright-scarlet duffle-coat. The bar was very crowded, with a highly heterogeneous collec-

tion of country racegoers, not one in a hundred of whom recognised Huston, and he took several minutes getting the drinks, during which, I afterwards realised, he was trying to decide whether or not to make his proposal. He came back with the whiskeys, still undecided, and we engaged in small-talk for a few more minutes till he arrived at his decision.

'I've an idea, John,' he then said, drawing me aside from Lorry. 'I don't want you to count too much on anything, for there are nine chances in ten nothing will come of it.' He then told me, to my complete amazement, that he thought I 'might be right', as he put it, for a part, which he didn't specify, in a movie he was going to make. Would I, he asked, come over to England for a screen test? It would be around Christmas, he added.

No one, I think, has ever made me a proposition which surprised me more—and I've had some propositions. My acting experience was limited, as I now told Huston, who laughed happily, to having played the Mad Hatter in *Alice in Wonderland*, when I was thirteen, in the annual play at my prep school. It had never occurred to me for the smallest moment that I would ever act again. I knew that Huston's next movie was to be *Moby Dick*, and I wondered in what possible role he could see me; of course, it was sure to be a very small one. I told him I thought it would be a lot of fun to have the test.

'That's fine, kid—just fine,' said Huston, grinning all over his face and gulping his whiskey. 'I'll call you,' he said.

At this moment a little man, who looked like a jockey and very probably was one, appeared from nowhere, and Huston, without another word, silently vanished with him, and I heard nothing for several weeks. Huston had popped up suddenly like a tweedy genie,

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made his suggestion, and disappeared. 'Did I really meet him?' I asked myself. 'Did he say those things?' I walked about the race-course in a dream.

It was only that evening that I learned from Ray Bradbury, with whom I happened to be dining, that I was to be tested for the part of Ishmael. Ray had arrived recently in Ireland to write the screenplay of *Moby Dick*, his first. I cannot, even now, describe my precise emotions when he told me. Ishmael, Melville's narrator, the only character who goes right through the book, would be the third lead in the movie, to Gregory Peck's Ahab and Leo Genn's Starbuck. 'God, I'm pleased for you,' said Ray, grinning behind his thickly-lensed spectacles. "'Call me Ishmael,' eh?' he quoted, laughing.

I'm ashamed to say I was on the verge of hysteria all evening. I kept remembering what had happened, and what was going to happen, and each time I felt as though, unless I strictly controlled myself, I would burst into convulsive laughter. My whole life seemed suddenly to have been lifted to a new level.

I returned to Killegar next day and tried to get on with farm work, but it had somehow become difficult to concentrate on making compost and digging drains. Various day-dreams began to grow to immense proportions inside me, try as I might to prevent them. These were based alternately on the sudden prospect of fame—name in coloured lights, première, myself on the silver screen, an Oscar, a starring role—and, of course, on the equally unexpected prospect of making a lot of money. I had a special reason for hoping, perhaps more than anything in the world, that Huston would call me Ishmael.

Killegar was up for sale when I inherited it from my father on his death in 1950. I took it off the market and have somehow managed to keep hold of it since then, by hard work and overdrafts, but it still loses money, because it is badly under-capitalised. To pay the farm loss, and maintain life at a modest level, I must earn well over two thousand pounds a year by writing and lecturing. I did this without much difficulty when I had no other occupation, but I generally have not since I have also had a farm to run. I had come to realise, therefore, that I would have to sell Killegar, which I deeply love, and which has belonged to my family for two centuries, unless something

very extraordinary happened sooner or later—and it was getting later all the time—such as winning the Irish Sweep or marrying a millionairess: but all the girls I love are penniless. My friend Deacon and I, in our discussions of the future, found we had so often to refer to the necessity of such a *deus* (or, of course, *dea*) *ex machina* that we had come to call it, for brevity's sake, simply a D.X.M. 'Unless a D.X.M. turns up by April, we'll have to . . .' Now, suddenly, Huston was my potent, potential D.X.M. personified.

The shooting of *Moby Dick*, which was to start in mid-July, was then expected to take twenty weeks. I might, I supposed, I know not with what accuracy, get four or five hundred pounds a week. Heavens! Eight or ten thousand pounds! If I could put that into Killegar—and thus I would avoid paying income tax on the greater part of it, since it would be chargeable to the farm account—it should become practically self-supporting thereafter, and its future, at last, would be permanently secure.

I of course worked out—how could I help working out?—exactly what I would do with my Ishmael earnings. I'm a believer in organic farming, so I wouldn't be buying chemicals; but I earmarked no less than two thousand pounds for the purchase of farmyard manure, and a couple of hundred for a muck-spreader. Then I would order a thousand tons of lime, which, spread, would cost a pound a ton; that would be enough to give a dressing of six tons an acre to the three-quarters of my land which I haven't yet been able to lime myself. Within five years, I reckoned, I would be able to feed nearly twice as many cattle—my average, including calves, was sixty-seven last year—which would add at least twelve hundred pounds a year to my income, virtually without increasing my overhead. Well, I would have to put aside a bit, say another fifteen hundred, for the purchase of new stock, and this was to include a really good Aberdeen Angus bull—I am not wholeheartedly in favour of artificial insemination. And so on, in the greatest detail. I decided *not* to put in electric-light, since paraffin-lamps and candlelight are too much a part of Killegar. Mr Micawber, in short, became Mr Mitty overnight.

BUT Christmas came and went, and I heard nothing whatever from Huston. On December 28th I met him briefly at Luggala.

CALL ME ISHMAEL

I mentioned that I was leaving for New York on January 16th for a six weeks' lecture tour, and he said the screen test would probably be on my return, but he might want to do a reading test first.

A week later I was again at Oonagh's. Huston wasn't there. The evening went on till six next morning, when I went to sleep for a couple of hours on the sofa in the drawing-room. At two-fifteen, in the middle of lunch, Lorry called and said I was to come over immediately for the reading test; Huston would be leaving at five for Tipperary, to spend the next day with the Black and Tans, who hunt in the adjacent County Limerick, and it is a good hour's run from Luggala to Courtown. I swallowed three aspirins and left at once in Deacon's car, a Triumph, since the V-8 was being temperamental.

When I reached Courtown, I found Ricki Huston, the Director's fourth wife, alone in the living-room, in riding clothes, looking very pale and sad and beautiful. She gave me a Scotch. There was a strange air of tension about the house. Five minutes later Huston came in. He was wearing a brown tweed suit and carried a mimeographed copy of the script in a red cover. 'Well,' he said, in his most expansive manner, putting an arm around me, 'how's the boy?' The boy, who was feeling horrible, said he was feeling just fine. Huston led me into another room, where, handing me the script, he told me to spend five minutes studying the first four pages. He then left me.

I had never seen a film script before. I opened it and began to read as follows:

FADE IN:

1. L.S. EXT. A SEA OF HILLS (OVER WHICH THE TITLES APPEAR). DAY.

Through the green hills, far away, is a winding road. On this road, as the titles fade, we see a man walking with a stick and a carpet-bag, so small, however, that the sea of hills surrounds and almost engulfs him.

2. L.S. EXT. WINDING ROAD. DAY.

The CAMERA moves closer until it touches the road as the man comes over a rise and stands looking at the country, silhouetted against the sky.

ISHMAEL'S VOICE (o.s.): Call me Ishmael.

I was already well acquainted with the opening passage of the book, as Melville wrote it, and I found myself somewhat distracted by the changes which had been made. In the

first four pages there were fifty seconds of narration. I had time to read it, and the directions, nearly twice before Huston came back. 'Did you go through that, kid?' he asked me. 'Well, just read it aloud to me, will you? Just your ordinary voice, kid. Don't try any kind of accent.'

It certainly had not occurred to me to try any accent other than my own. I looked at the script, and saw the solid rectangular block of words which I now had to read, and, at the last moment, realised suddenly that the *rest of my life*, and Killegar's, depended on the way I read them. I prevented myself from speaking for five full seconds, whilst I pulled myself together, and then began:

'Call me Ishmael. Some years ago, having little or no money, I thought I would sail about and see the oceans of the world. Whenever I grow grim and spleenful, whenever I find myself pausing before coffin warehouses and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet, whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul, then I know it's high time to get to sea again.'

And so on. I made no mistakes and, when I had finished, there was silence for ten seconds. I felt I had read it pretty well.

'That—was—very—good—John,' said Huston at last, drawing out each word. He looked at me intently. 'Very good,' he repeated. 'You have no accent!' he said, in an amazed way. 'You simply have no accent at all!' I did not know what he meant by this, but I felt pleased, and smiled. There was another silence, and he then asked me to read the whole passage over again.

This time, as I did so, Huston put his elbows on the mantelpiece and buried his face in his hands. He was no longer, I realised, at Courtown in County Kildare; he was at the première, and the last title—DIRECTED BY JOHN HUSTON—had just faded, and there was a green sea of hills on the screen, and from behind them was coming this voice which he was now hearing.

'Call me Ishmael,' I read again. Oh, yes! Please! Call me Ishmael!

When it was over, there was complete silence for more than a minute, whilst Huston remained motionless, head in hands. At last he looked up, smiling: 'Very—good—indeed,' he said, enthusiastically. He paused, reflecting. 'When are you due back from the States, kid?' he asked.

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'The second week in March.'

'We'll have the test in March,' he said, then reflected and added, 'or in May.' I remember wondering what was wrong with April. 'You've an address over there?'

'Care of my lecture agent, Lillian Mills.'

'Let's find Lorry and give it her. Now where—'

He broke off in the middle of the sentence, and those were literally the last words he spoke to me for four months. He went off, I suppose to look for Lorry, and I walked back to the other room and waited. Soon Ricki came in, then Huston. They discussed some domestic matters and then went out. The car was waiting at the front-door for Huston. Just before he left, he came back into the room, looking for something. He saw me and, at first, examined me in a surprised way as though he didn't know why I was there. Then, apparently remembering, he walked towards me, grinned, and, just as I thought he was bound to say *something*, turned and went out of the room without a word. I stood on the front steps with Ricki and Lorry as the great car, bearing the great man, swept off over the gravel on the way to Tipperary.

DURING the next four months I don't suppose there was a single waking hour during which I did not remember about Ishmael. The suspense in which I was held seemed to prevent me from doing *anything*. The effect was disintegrating. The longed-for phone-call which does not come, the desired letter which never arrives, build up an intolerable tension with the passage of time, as much from a movie director as from a girl one hopes to love.

On May 2nd, five months after our Navan meeting, when I happened to be in London, I received a message from Lorry that Huston, who was also in London, wanted to see me. We met in the bedroom of his suite at Claridge's. He gave me a Scotch and greeted me just as effusively as ever. Then he told me it had been decided, by the people who were paying for the movie, that the part of Ishmael—the American narrator in a great American novel—should be *played* by an American. He looked at me, eyebrows up, to see if I understood this point. I did. Well, the fact was, it was now ninety-five per cent certain that Monty Clift would play Ishmael.

'But I'll tell you what I'll do, kid,' said

Huston quickly. 'Come to Youghal in July and I'll give you a part in the movie. Just for the three weeks we're going to be in Ireland.' Youghal, a forgotten fishing-village in County Cork, had been chosen by Huston as the location for the New Bedford scenes.

'That would be fine, John, just fine,' I said. I returned to Killegar that evening.

My principal reaction, I realised with surprise next day, as I took the harrow over some old grazing-fields in Drumergoul, was intense relief. I was, of course, violently disappointed, and, irrationally, somehow felt a fool, since everyone had known about the screen test—the story had been in the papers. But, overriding these feelings, was the fact that at last I knew definitely that the dream was over. I could get back to normal life again, I could get back to work, the D.X.M. as far away as ever.

IT was a late season, and I couldn't cut the first meadow for silage till June 5th. Four days later, when work was in full swing, Helen, the parlourmaid, appeared in the field to say there was a call from London. 'I t'ink 'tis an American lady,' she said. Frank took over the tractor, I borrowed Helen's bicycle, and four minutes later I was speaking to Lorry.

'I have news for you,' she said.

At once everything became completely unreal again.

'Mr Huston would like you to come over for a screen test,' said this voice, three hundred and sixty miles away. 'Miss Sims will call you to-morrow, with details. O.K.?'

'O.K.,' I said, and went back to work. But, slowly, the whole future was disintegrating again.

Next day, Thursday, the call came from Miss Sims. Jeanie, as I later knew her, is English, and she was the other of Huston's two secretaries. 'We'd like you to be here by noon on Saturday,' she said.

I told her it would be difficult, but I could make it. And then I dared to ask: 'Would you mind telling me for which part I'm to be tested?'

'Ishmael,' said Miss Sims.

At once everything, which for a few weeks had been relatively stabilised, was again thrown into complete disequilibrium.

When I left Killegar a few hours later, I felt like Ishmael setting forth for Nantucket. Next day, the King's Arms in Shepherd Market was

CALL ME ISHMAEL

my Spouter Inn, and here I met Jeanie (instead of Queequeg), who gave me a copy of the script. The test, I learned, would probably be on Monday—two short scenes, each of just under a minute, which she had marked in the script and now showed me. I was to have a fitting next day at Berman's, the theatrical costumiers in Covent Garden, and she would call me when a time for the test had been set.

Everything, by now, had become totally unreal. I went and tried on my clothes, with the assistance of a very elegant young dresser, and they fitted very well—a jacket of rough tweed, brownish with silver buttons; closely-fitting grey trousers with a nautical swing to them; a brown kerchief, patterned with black, round my neck; stout black boots; and a small black cap with a shiny black peak.

The screen test didn't take place on Monday, nor on Tuesday, but eventually I had a call from Jeanie that it would definitely be on Wednesday, when a car would pick me up at eight in the morning to take me to the studios.

At Elstree, about an hour from London in the shiny black Rolls which they sent for me, I was put into the hands of a smooth young Assistant Director in a smart grey flannel suit, Peter Price, who conducted me to a dressing-room, where I put on my costume. I was then led to the make-up department, where I met Friedrich Ledebur, a most charming Austrian count, whom I had met once before—at Luggala, where one meets everyone. He was being made up as Queequeg, with whom I was to play one of my two scenes; his head had been shaved and a long topknot of hair affixed to it, and his entire face and upper body were being covered with a grotesque, Maori-like tattoo. I was given sideburns, and rather longer hair—although, in anticipation of this moment, I hadn't had a haircut since January—and my face was dirtied a little, and that was all.

Shortly before ten, when Huston was expected, I was taken by Price to the studio, not really believing it was happening at all. Some twenty or thirty members of the unit were waiting about, doing nothing in particular. They seemed unaware of me. There was a feeling of desolation about the place, as though it were an old, disused warehouse, suddenly taken over for some fantastic, unexplained purpose. One half, where the deck of the *Pequod* and other *Moby Dick* sets had been constructed, was being occupied by Huston's unit. In the other, not separated from it

in any way, were the sets for *The Dam Busters*, which was already in production; huge sections of R.A.F. bombers were the *Pequod's* incongruous neighbours. I wandered around, pretending to be very nonchalant, but all the time I was thinking: 'What the hell am I doing here?'

THE Director arrived a few minutes after ten. He was accompanied by a little flurry of secretaries and technicians, and greeted me in a very friendly way, looking me up and down and grinning. 'You look fine, John,' he said inevitably. Then Queequeg came in, fully made-up and looking fantastic. We three sat on a couple of sea-chests, talking and drinking coffee, but we did not discuss the scene we were about to play. Nor did Huston say a word about his changed decision to test me for this part after all. After a while, someone told Huston everything was ready, and he called for a rehearsal.

We first did the scene between Friedrich and me. In this, of which there is no hint in Melville, Ishmael is trying to persuade Queequeg not to die. As it takes place in the tropics, Queequeg wears only a loincloth, and Ishmael, bare-headed, is in his shirt-sleeves. The scene begins as follows:

ISHMAEL: Queequeg, you got to eat. (*Queequeg makes no reply.*) A drink of water, then. (*This doesn't touch Queequeg either. Queequeg is as silent and stony as an idol.*) Queequeg, if you go on like this, I shall be very angry. (*No reply, nothing. Ishmael, on his knees, casts eagerly about for an argument.*) Queequeg, I absolutely forbid you to die.

Throughout the scene, Queequeg remains motionless, squatting on the deck, and makes no response of any kind.

Friedrich and I took up our positions on the set, a prop-man handed me an enormous square biscuit and a mug of water, and Huston said: 'Just act the scene naturally, John—just act it the way you feel it.' Although I had made sure of knowing my lines perfectly, I had not worked out beforehand the actions and movements with which I would accompany them. An assistant shouted: 'Quiet, please—we're rehearsing.' Huston shouted: 'Action!' And I, naturally, just acted the scene.

Beyond the lights there were people, but I

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could not see them, and I forced myself to be unaware of them, even of Huston. All I could see was Queequeg's motionless face, like a huge, unblinking lizard. When it was over—'Queequeg, I hold you to your promise'—I heard Huston shout 'Cut!' and he emerged from the outer darkness. 'Very good, John,' he said, in a surprised voice, which *seemed* to say: 'I didn't expect anything as good as *that*.' 'Now, why don't you hold the biscuit *this way*?' he went on, showing me. 'And the water like *this*? Try it again, kid.'

We rehearsed it eleven or twelve times, right through every time, and every time Huston built up a little bit more of the scene, giving it life and depth, taking each of the nine sentences I had to say by turn, not always in order, and showing me how he wanted it done.

His first words after each rehearsal were always very encouraging: 'It's coming along very *well*, kid,' he would say, grinning, head cocked, in his surprised voice. 'Now, why don't you start it right here, on your *knees*? Show the camera your face, kid. Try it again, now. *Action!*' I tried it again.

AFTER about an hour, Huston decided he was ready to shoot, and I had a brief respite while the necessary final preparations were made. I had a coffee and a cigarette with Friedrich; a couple of stand-ins took our positions on the set. 'O.K., let's take it,' said Huston at last. Friedrich and I stubbed our cigarettes and replaced the stand-ins. 'Quiet, please—we're shooting,' shouted an assistant. Complete silence, and the lights, and Queequeg—nothing more. I knelt down and held up the huge biscuit to Queequeg's unmoving lips. Somewhere out of the darkness came Huston's voice: '*Action!*'

'Queequeg, you got to eat,' I said.

It was no different from a rehearsal, and, when it was over, Huston, after a consultation with the camera crew, said: 'O.K. boys—that's *it*.' We'd got it on the first take. Huston seemed really pleased and enthusiastic. He told Queequeg he wouldn't be wanted for a while, and at once began to discuss the second scene with me. This was the opening sequence, the one I had read to him, long, long before at Courtown.

The difficulty which this presented to me is that it is not a dramatic scene. It is narration. In the theatre, the audience will see Ishmael in the distance, on the winding road amid the

green sea of hills, and will hear his voice in the background. But *I* was to be on the deck of the *Pequod*, speaking the words *in vacuo*. I was given a stick and a carpet-bag, and Huston again began the process of building up the scene.

'Call me Ishmael,' I said, to nobody at all.

When we had rehearsed it five times, Huston suddenly said: 'Let's shoot it.'

I felt we had only covered about half the ground, and was nowhere near ready, and, consequently, acted it so badly that we had to have a second take. This got me worried, and the second take was tense and overplayed.

Huston laughed. 'Now do it without trying at all,' he said.

I tried not to try, but the third take was the worst of all. The fourth was the best so far, though I was not at all pleased with it.

'O.K., kid—that's it,' said Huston, and grinned enthusiastically.

I had no idea at all what he thought of my performance. He just thanked me for coming over, and said he'd be getting in touch with me. My make-up was removed and I was taken back to my dressing-room, where it was suggested I should wait until a car was fixed to take me to London. It was a few minutes past twelve, and, as soon as I was left alone, I found I was exhausted. I changed, and then lay down on a couch in the dressing-room, whereupon, to my subsequent astonishment, I fell soundly asleep, and stayed asleep for almost an hour. When I awoke, it was half-past one. I walked about the building, but it was suddenly deserted. I found my way to the studio and it, too, was empty. I stood again on the deck of the *Pequod*, where all had been decided. There was no sign of Huston and his unit. After an hour or two I ran into Peter Price, who seemed surprised to see me. 'I thought you'd gone,' he said. He arranged a taxi for me quickly, but not quite so quickly that I did not see the back view of another Ishmael, wearing my identical clothes, entering the studio.

TWO days later I set off for Killegar, after seeing the test, with some friends, in a projection-room in the Associated British Picture Corporation's headquarters in Golden Square, Soho. I thought it wasn't bad.

When I came to add things up, I found my nine days' absence had been disastrous financially; they had cost me over fifty pounds.

Progress had been made with the silage, but we were inevitably behind schedule. However, I found it impossible to do any work till I knew the result of the test. I spent all my time waiting for the telephone.

Nine days after the test, a Friday, Huston's letter arrived. It was dated Tuesday, but had been posted on Wednesday. 'The fact is,' he wrote in part, 'that although your performance was very good, especially for someone who has never before acted for the screen, various other factors—such as have always to be considered when casting a picture of this kind—finally persuaded me that you were not quite right for this particular part.'

I walked out of the house to join the men in the fields and, that evening, we worked till past dark, till the very last load had been carried and ensiled from the Acre and the Orchard.

RICHARD BASEHART is playing Ishmael in Huston's *Moby Dick*. Huston kept his promise to give me a part in the movie. I drove down to Youghal on 11th July—by then, we had the silo filled and were making hay in Drumergoul—without knowing what it was going to be. In due course I was dressed up as a seaman—*Pequod* Sailor No. 29—and spent all my time on the quayside with the other extras, who, however, were sometimes used in crowd scenes.

After a week Huston wanted a shot of three men coming on board the *Pequod*, each carrying a live pig, and he decided one of these was just the part for me. We rehearsed the scene four times, and each time the pig, which must have weighed six stone, became heavier and objected more. 'Try holding the pig a little higher, John,' said Huston. 'Once more, please.' He enjoyed it all immensely. We got it on the third take, and it provided the best

entertainment, for the spectators, of the day. Later it was discovered that the camera angle had been wrong and the scene had to be re-shot, and I happened not to be there at the time. I spent another week on the quayside, and was not called again.

However, as things turned out, I spent three months on location with *Moby Dick*. Last minute revisions were necessary for the screenplay, and Huston hired me to work on them with him. He paid me an average of seventy-three pounds a week, which was certainly better than nothing. Throughout this time, we worked very closely together, but he only once mentioned, even by inference, the Ishmael test. It was as if it had totally disappeared from his mind, and I still have no idea at all what those 'various other factors' were.

A day or two before I left the unit, at dinner in the hotel which the unit had taken over, we were discussing a certain movie and, in particular, the performance of a certain actor in it. I thought it had been a very bad performance, and Leo Genn agreed with me; Huston and Greg Peck, on the other hand, thought it had been magnificent. A dozen others at the same table were listening to the argument. I persisted in my criticism, strongly, giving my reasons, and, as I did so, I saw Huston was getting angry. He finally looked up at me. 'John, if you say any more, I'll have to show you a certain screen test,' he said.

I was so completely taken aback by the irrelevance of this that I gave the wrong answer. 'That was your idea, John,' I said.

'Oh, no, John—your idea,' said Huston.

Everything in front of me became suddenly unsteady. Had it been my idea? It was all a very long time ago by now, but was that the way it happened? Everyone was waiting for my reply. I looked back at Huston and found I could say nothing at all.

Mal de Camel

*Camel, dost thou want my breakfast?
Curse the beast! To break my neck fast
Seems his one intent at present.
This is anything but pleasant!*

*Camel, dost thou want my dinner?
Steadily I'm getting thinner;
Breakfast gone and dinner going—
How long this martyrdom is growing!*

*Camel, dost thou want my supper?
Have it, camel, in the upper
Dining-room, for I would cede it
All to thee, since I don't need it!*

D. STEVENS.



Outlaw

GIBSON COWAN

I LIT a cigarette, holding the match as high as possible to show my face. A bullet nicked the bark from the tree under which I sat. I hoped it was Ornitharis.

Themistokles was the leader of the gang, but although, less than a week before, he had ambushed and killed a policeman in cold blood I knew that he was too cunning to give himself away with an unnecessary shot that would be audible for five miles.

I lit a second match from the first and held it up as steadily as I could. I hoped that it was not the police, who had placed a curfew on half the forest and had posted notices that they would shoot at sight after dark. A knife embedded itself in the trunk three feet over my head. It was a cork-handled throwing-knife, and I recognised it as part of the 'Cowboy Outfit' on sale at most of the island's toyshops.

ELIAS ORNITHARIS had been my pupil when I had been teaching in a local school, but in the holidays he had learned that his sister had been seduced by a youth in the same form. The youth had married the girl, but, with some confused idea of saving the family honour, Ornitharis had run amok at the

wedding, killing one of the bridegroom's relatives with a shotgun and wounding five. It was generally believed that his friends had paid Themistokles to take him into the hills.

'Hallo, Elias! Do you still remember your English?' I asked.

A voice answered in Greek: 'Put your hands above your head and face the tree.'

I had forgotten about Demetrios, the third member of the gang. I did what I was told. 'I was supposed to meet Ornitharis,' I said.

He held me against the tree with one hand while with the other he frisked me in what I am sure he imagined to be the Buck Jones manner.

'Why the melodramatics with the rifle and the knife?' I asked.

'I wanted to see if you had a gun.'

'If I was going to use a gun I shouldn't have stayed there holding up a match so that you could take aim,' I said.

'What do you want to see Ornitharis for?'

I was not too worried now that I had established contact. The outlaws were proud of their notoriety, and rumour had it that Demetrios kept a book of his press-cuttings. In a fit of journalistic exuberance I had been responsible for their leader's title of 'The Cyprus Robin Hood'. It was not likely that

they would spoil their publicity by allowing anything to happen to the editor of the *Cyprus Mail*.

'I came to talk to Ornitharis,' I said, 'but you will do if you will take a message. I happen to be a friend of Ornitharis, and I knew that he would recognise me. Somebody—and if you don't know who, so much the better—told me that he would meet me here.'

'We don't trust Ornitharis. We don't trust anybody,' he said.

'Look! Suppose that you take your hand out of the middle of my back and let me get a cigarette—then we can talk.'

He stood back.

I took my cigarette-case out of my pocket before turning round. 'Would you care for a cigarette?' I asked.

'I don't smoke on duty.'

'You're in the Outlaws, not in the Army,' I said.

'What are you going to write about me?'

I was angry. 'Your obituary,' I answered. He did not appear to understand, and I amended it to: 'That depends on what you have to say.'

'You can tell them that I will not be taken alive.'

'That's not a very original quote. What do you expect to do? You can't hope to get off the island. You will have to give in at the end.'

'You think so? I'll tell you something,' he said.

'Good!'

'We've got a plan. It was me that thought of it.'

'Well, what is it?'

'I'll tell you in absolute confidence.'

'Sure!'

'You won't write or say anything?'

'Completely off the record.'

'King Farouk is coming to the island.'

'I know. You read it in my paper last week.'

'He is going to stay at a hotel in the mountains.'

'That's what I said. He always does.'

'We are going to kidnap him.'

'Oh?'

'We'll hold him as a hostage and keep him until they let us go.'

'Go where?'

'To Turkey.'

'That will make quite a story,' I said.

The crime for which Demetrios was wanted was crazy enough. He had lived at Kelokedra,

near Paphos, and was a friend of the secretary of the village co-operative society. With the distribution of the first consignment of post-war cloth, the secretary had been accused of favouritism. Enraged, he had sent Demetrios to his house for a gun and at his instruction Demetrios had shot seven villagers, killing three. There was no doubt that he was a psychopathic case.

'Remember that the kidnapping was my plan,' he said.

'I'll see that you get full credit—when it happens. And now what about taking me to Ornitharis?'

'He isn't here.'

'Where is he then?'

'I don't know.'

'You must know. Why don't you want me to see him?'

'What do you want to see Ornitharis for?'

'I've told you. I'm his friend. He hasn't a chance. I want to advise him to give himself up and stand trial. It would help if I was able to announce in the paper that he had promised to surrender of his own free will. A good lawyer might be able to plead provocation and youth.'

'Ornitharis doesn't want to talk to anyone.'

'I understood that he did.'

'He won't be taken alive.'

'I'd prefer to speak to him myself.'

'There isn't anything more to say.'

'I see. In that case perhaps you could take me down as far as the Forest Road. It won't help you, or me, if I run into a Forest Guard.'

'You go in front,' he said.

THE moon had not yet risen and it was not light enough to see his face. To be sure of finding the spot, I had arrived before sunset and sat waiting for Ornitharis to turn up. I could not have moved a foot in the dark without breaking my neck. 'How can I lead if I don't know the way?' I asked. 'Incidentally, I can't see what you are doing with that gun, but you might keep it pointed away from me. I don't want to get my head blown off by accident if you trip up.'

'I understand guns,' he said.

He took my arm and led me straight into a gully. So much for his woodcraft on a dark night! I scrambled to my feet. It was easy to understand police difficulties in country like this. It was over an hour later, and the moon had risen, when I felt a cinder-track

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under my feet. 'This is the Forest Road, isn't it?' I asked.

I was able to see him properly for the first time. He was a tall, somewhat weedy youth with an attempt at a turned-up moustache, and, although Greek, he wore the black baggy cotton bloomers of a Paphos goatherd above high Turkish boots, and an embroidered waistcoat over a ragged shirt. Round his waist was a new brass-studded American belt and over his right shoulder, in addition to an Italian carbine, was a tasselled brown leather bag. He was unshaven and looked tired. We walked along the road. He showed no intention of leaving me. It seemed a good moment for confidences. 'What made you kill all those people at Kelokedra?' I inquired.

'I didn't kill anybody,' he replied quickly.

'Oh?' I said lamely. 'I thought you did.'

'I wasn't there. I was framed. If it had been me, I should have killed all seven of them. I should have shot them through the heart.'

'Why?'

'They called my friend a thief.'

'It's no business of mine, but if I were you I wouldn't stick to that story. The police will produce witnesses, and you were well known. Why don't you stand trial? You will get a lawyer and he will tell you what to do. How long have you been in the woods?'

'About a year.' He was silent for a moment, and then asked: 'Do you think, if I said I was drunk . . .?'

'Frankly, I don't think your chances are high, but you've got nothing to lose. There are more than a thousand police and five hundred soldiers with tommy-guns surround-

ing the whole district. They have evacuated a dozen villages already and you will have to go somewhere for food. It's only a question of time. Themistokles already has three killings to his credit, and you know how he started off—ripping a kid of fourteen with a knife because he laughed. It was his savagery that was responsible for the Outlawry Bill. If you stay with him, there are bound to be more killings and you're in deep enough as it is. I can't promise you much, but Ornitharis might get off with a term in jail. Will you give him a message?' I asked.

'Ornitharis doesn't want to talk to anybody.'

'Is that what Themistokles said?'

He did not answer.

The road turned sharply to the right past an old mill. 'Don't you think you'd better leave me here? There may be a guard on the bridge.'

He hesitated.

I handed him the remainder of my cigarettes. 'So you haven't anything to say except that you won't be taken alive?'

'I haven't said anything. I haven't said anything at all. Don't say that I have said anything,' he said.

When I looked back, he was still standing in the road.

A FEW days later Themistokles died riddled with police bullets outside a shop in Vretcha where he had gone to purchase tobacco. Demetrios and Ornitharis, separately and unknown to each other, gave themselves up. They were both hanged.

Quicksilver

*I saw the summer a day behind,
Blowing the blossom awake on the wind.
I saw the summer a day beyond,
Scattering pins of rain in a pond.
And I laughed at the world as I heard it say:
'To-morrow the rose will be yesterday!'*

*I watched the winter a day too soon
Shuttle a shadow across the moon.
I watched the winter a day too late
Dripping a thaw from a garden gate.
And I laughed at the lamp and the latch and the chime,
Trying to tether the ends of Time.*

HAZEL TOWNSON,

Gun-Hungry

REGINALD HARGREAVES

THERE can be few men who fail to respond to the feel of a well-balanced firearm. It is a characteristic confined to no one race; and for many years the gun-hunger of certain native peoples has encouraged a steady if unlawful traffic in weapons for 'the shiny East'.

From illicit forwarding depots in the Persian Gulf firearms—of a sort—were, and still are, smuggled ashore on the Pakistan mainland for eventual sale to the turbulent tribesmen of India's North-West Frontier. Other supplies are diverted to, among other places, the barren hinterland of the Zagros, separating Persia from Iraq.

The mountainous Zagros is amongst the most bitter and dispiriting territories on the face of the globe, its rare villages often being as much as three days' journey apart. They are inhabited by such quarrelsome feudal clans as the Kurds, Bakhtiari, Lur, and Kashgai, who tend their flocks of sheep and herds of goats in the infrequent fertile valleys. Grazing being so sparse, its tenure gives rise to unending disputes; while blood-feuds rage with the utmost ferocity, and are carried on from one generation to another. In such circumstances the urge to become the owner of a better firearm than that in the possession of a vengeful neighbour is easily to be understood. So smuggled weapons of all kinds, from an ancient Lebel to a worn-out Sharp's breech-loader, frequently change hands, sometimes for as little as a couple of pounds apiece. But a really good modern rifle commands up to five and twenty pounds, the purchase-price often being paid in gold.

Ammunition is equally hard to come by, and is hoarded jealously; while the very greatest ingenuity is displayed in adapting any cartridges already in stock to fit their owner's latest acquisition in the way of a gun. As is invariably the case where the necessary rounds

are in perpetual short supply, the standard of marksmanship is exceptionally high. As with the early Boer Voortrekkers, every shot is made to count, and the prudent stranger will approach a village with his empty hands well in view, as a guarantee of his peaceful intentions.

SOME amazing junk has found its way through the back-door of Baluchistan to the wild hill-tribesmen—Afghans, Rohillas, and Pathans—who in bygone days were ever ready for a trial of arms with the British-Indian troops charged with the preservation of law and order on the restless North-West Frontier. At one time almost anything that would pass as a firearm found a ready sale, and some of the stuff that found its way into the hills would have disgraced a self-respecting scrap-heap. It was certainly far from unusual to come across a smooth-bore 'Brown Bess' dating from the Crimean War, or an 1850 Prussian needle-gun; while an early Snider-converted Enfield was regarded with an affection such as William Tell must have reserved for his pet bow.

In the foothills of the Pamirs, however, weapons even more primitive were in steady circulation, as doubtless they still are, for this is the region wherein dwells the Marri tribe, which even by its untutored neighbours is regarded as hardly up to the distinctly modest standards of advancement elsewhere prevailing. In the days of their glory as the scourge of the Sind, the Marri had been 'mighty hunters before the Lord', and, despite grinding poverty and the most elementary weapons, that tradition triumphantly persisted. Even the knowledge that his old-fashioned matchlock was as liable as not to misfire would by no means deter a Marri hunter from going out single-handed after

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leopard—and bringing home his bag nine times out of ten.

In the old days, when the British-Indian army acted as wardens of the Frontier, the opportunity to get a real up-to-date firearm between his hands brought many a stalwart Marri recruit into one or other of the corps of Guides. But it was a desperate step to take, since by accepting the Queen's shilling he invited the Imam's solemn priestly curse, for by the strict religious laws of the Marri all the men of the tribe were compelled to go garbed in white, and white only, whereas the uniform of the Guides was khaki. Yet in the struggle between traditional religious observance and rampant gun-hunger the day was not always won by piety.

To supply an ever-urgent demand, a factory for the fabrication of firearms was quietly brought into operation in the tongue of tribal territory through which ran the military road from Kohat to the great frontier city of Peshawar. Strictly speaking, the whole enterprise was illegal, under the treaty terms concluded with the frontier tribal leaders, but the authorities preferred to turn a blind eye on activities it would have taken a sizeable punitive force to suppress. Nor was the official attitude of bland unawareness entirely without guile, for although the 'Pass rifle', as it was termed, so closely resembled the ordinary British service weapon as to deceive any but an experienced armoured, with use the native product soon became fantastically inaccurate. This was due to the softness of the metal used for the barrel and the breech mechanism, a handicap the local craftsmen seemed powerless to overcome.

It has to be recognised, however, that, with the primitive conditions of manufacture that prevailed, great ingenuity was required to turn out anything like a firearm at all. Having regard to the elementary tools available, perhaps the manufacture of the barrel was the most cunning process of all. Firstly, an oblong piece of solid metal was cut to the required length. It was then mounted on a lathe and rotated by a small boy spinning a bicycle-wheel, from which a belt ran to the chuck which gripped the embryo barrel. At one end—the muzzle end—a knitting-needle, with a length of file soldered to it, was brought into impact with the appropriate spot by a weight on a string. As the boy revolved the steel barrel, the knitting-needle with its file attachment gradually ate into the solid end.

Some weeks later it emerged—*Inshallah!*—having penetrated the whole length of the bore. The outside of the barrel was then turned concentrically with the bore. The rifling was done by hand, with a nicety and precision that had to be seen to be believed.

In the factory's heyday a 'Pass rifle', the outcome of many weeks' labour, would change hands at about eighty rupees, approximately £6 sterling. A stolen British service rifle commanded, of course, ten times as much in the Thieves' Bazaar in Peshawar, the quarter where filched Government stores—serviceable and even unserviceable firearms, cartridges, saddlery, blankets, and equipment—were freely, albeit surreptitiously, bought and sold.

RIFLE-STEALING was an art in which the hillmen and their emissaries of the Bazaar were past masters. Their easiest prey was a British regiment newly arrived for duty on the Frontier and all unversed in the fierce and unremitting watchfulness in which lay the only hope of defeating the raids on the small-arms they had brought with them. It was useless to collect all the rifles at sundown and put them under lock and key in the regimental armoury, for even a brick or concrete building has foundations that can be burrowed under—and at this sort of work 'dear brown brother' could give points and a beating to a badger. To collect the rifles in each barrack dormitory, assemble and lock them in an arms-rack at the end of the room, and mount a sentry over them, was a method that could be relied upon—for a time.

But inevitably the night came when a sudden, if false, alarm of fire, or the spectacle of a carefully-introduced hooded cobra slithering along the floor-boards towards him, sufficiently distracted the sentry's attention to permit the abstraction of at least a couple of the bundooks over which he had been placed as guardian. Even if he saw, made a grab at and got his hands on the intruder, it was a moral certainty that he would not be able to hang on to the well-oiled body, which would wriggle out of his grasp with the facility of an eel.

Sometimes desperation went to the length of ordering the soldier quite literally to 'lie on his arms', the rifle, at night, being chained to the man's wrist and tucked under the edge of his mattress, usually on the right-hand side.

But even these extreme measures did not suffice to baffle the expert thief. Silently stealing into the barrack-room and approaching the charpoy of one of the heavier sleepers, he would settle down at the right-hand foot of it. Then, with the lightest possible touch, he would fold back the bed-covering and very gently tickle the sole of the sleeping soldier's foot. Almost invariably this ended in the slumbering man drawing up his leg, the act of bending the knee having the effect of turning his body ever so slightly on one side. At this point the would-be thief would sidle up the side of the charpoy until he was in a position to blow softly on the unconscious soldier's face. After a little of this treatment the sleeper would roll over completely on his left side, the

lift of his body giving easy access to the rifle tucked under the right-hand side of the mattress. A gentle snip with a pair of finely-tempered wire-cutters, and the longed-for bundook, released from its chain, could be smoothly withdrawn and the thief up and away without anyone being the wiser—until morning came to reveal with what stealth and patience the robbery had been effected.

It would be interesting to learn how the eternal problem of gun-hunger is being dealt with now that the wily tribesmen is confronted by native Frontier Guards endowed with a resourcefulness in no way inferior to his own. Somehow one cannot help feeling that the man from over the border still gets the best of it nine times out of ten!

Alligator Professor

GILLOW

I HAD not long been resident in the South American colony of British Guiana when I encountered a negro gentleman who carried about with him for hawking to the general public numerous exhibits of stuffed and varnished alligators in various assortments and postures. He was a good salesman, employing the sedate and confidential manner of approach, but he had a pretty shrewd idea as to market-value, and to secure any reduction of his quoted price was a tough matter. I don't blame him.

I was not so much interested in his wares. What I wanted to know was how Pile—Professor Pile, to give him his droll local title—managed to get hold of all these specimens. So I made cautious advances, and as soon as the worthy Professor decided that my curiosity was genuine—it took quite a bit of time for him to make up his mind—he opened the portals of his extensive knowledge and experience. Yes, I learnt a lot from this gentle-

man about alligators. He and I used to go for rambles together, what time I studied his technique and absorbed some of his lore. Perhaps at the same time he took stock of my several peculiarities. I shouldn't be surprised.

I WELL recollect our first outing, my guide, philosopher, and friend loaded with the paraphernalia of his craft and I with a camera and much attention. We went off to the Botanic Gardens, on the outskirts of Georgetown, the capital of the colony. These grounds contained many ornamental lakes and canals. Much of the area was just a riot of tropical herbage, a background, a verdant frame for the admirable trees, palms, lawns, and flowers of the cultivated portion. The waterways supported, amongst other things, a flourishing growth of the superb *Victoria regia*, an outsize water-lily with buoyant pads like immense circular green trays, some of them four feet

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and more across, with every here and there the large white blossoms.

It was amongst such profuse vegetation—some of the lakes were covered by salvers of this aquatic plant—that the Professor demonstrated to me how the artful alligator camouflaged himself and how he, Pile, managed to snare him. Standing on the bank of one of the Victoria-encumbered ponds, my instructor pointed out to me that what looked like a piece of floating debris could, under careful and guided observation, be detected as a basking alligator with the bulk of its body submerged and only the tip of the snout, the upper portion of the head embellished with the knobs of the eyeballs, and the frill on the upper part of the tail showing on the surface. This scalloped edge of the tail bore a remarkable similitude to the upturned, serrate rims of the water-lily pads. It was indeed amazing.

My companion, having spotted his prey, wasted no time in getting to work. Unlimbering his principal tool, a powerful but at the same time slightly-lissom wooden rod about ten feet in length armed at one end with a dangling noose of stout whipcord, he patiently brought it out over the surface of the water and deftly introduced the noose over the head and neck of the somnolent saurian. Then, with a sudden violent upward jerk, he ensnared the brute and yanked out on to the bank its four feet of vainly-resisting carcase. Binding its snapping jaws securely together, as well as the stumpy but agile legs, he unceremoniously popped his capture into a commodious wicker basket slung across his shoulders. And that was that.

THERE was more to come, however, for Pile then suggested to me that we pay a visit to a secluded lake in the same region, where, he said, a particularly large specimen of this breed of reptile had recently taken up residence, and, as it was the opening of the breeding season, there existed a good chance of capturing him.

On arrival at the spot, the Professor moved cautiously along the bank towards a piece of open water just in front of a dense growth of bamboos. I followed. Putting the rod down on the bank at his feet, he placed the palm of his left hand against his lips and produced a series, some loud, some soft, of peculiar sucking sounds. It was not so long before

there hastily emerged from the opposite bamboo thicket an alligator close on five feet in length, which slipped into the water and came swimming quite fearlessly towards us. It took up position just below where we stood, apparently engrossed in the cadences achieved by my confederate, who had previously explained to me that he proposed to attempt a capture by first attracting his quarry with an imitation of the mating-cry. So there it was, evidently a drama of life, love, and death, a reptilian Romeo waiting on a spurious Juliet! Continuing the labial lyric, Pile commenced to manipulate his lethal pole in the manner which I have previously described. But this time something went wrong, for the amorous brute suddenly plunged off, much to our chagrin. 'Dem bull'gators chase female too much,' remarked the Professor, a trifle sourly I thought. Practising this magnetic noise assiduously for some weeks afterwards, I one day succeeded in luring forth a scaly gentleman of my own—and was I proud of the feat?

ON another occasion my alligator expert put it to me that I might like—under his tutelage, of course—to investigate a nest of the female of the species. He took me some distance out into the country, where there was a sluggish stream bordered by clumps of bamboo. It was an eerie place, with a dark silence broken only by the creaking conversation of the many tall bamboo-poles as they swayed in the breeze. Underfoot was a matted carpet of fallen leaves and the thick overhead vegetation produced a heavy shade. The water was dark and still, unencumbered by aquatic growth of any kind.

My companion admonished me to proceed with stealth, to follow him closely, and, should he give the word, to run as fast as I could. Female alligators, he said, had no uncertain methods of dealing with disturbers of their nests should they come upon them unawares. Hot and perspiring, we forced a way through the tropical undergrowth and, at last, in the deepest recesses of a giant grove of thick-stemmed yellow-and-green-striped bamboos, came upon a piled-up waist-high heap of dead leaves, which Pile proposed I might like to open up, as it was an indubitable alligator nest. In the meantime he would keep a weather-eye open just in case the owner put in an appearance.

ALLIGATOR PROFESSOR

It was quite a job, as the layers of rotting leaves were solidly composed. They were damp and, as I delved my way downwards, with pauses just to see if my fellow-marauder was keeping an eye open instead of becoming lost in contemplation and a cigarette as was his habit, I remarked towards the middle of the mass a distinct rise in temperature. Suddenly I came upon the eggs, a batch of twenty-five, pure white, slightly larger than those of a duck, but somewhat more elongated. Their surfaces were rough, and rubbing two of them together produced a sound akin to that made when a couple of earthenware flower-pots are gently frictioned the one against the other. The Professor was delighted, and proceeded to transfer the clutch to his basket, wadding them down with handfuls of leaves and grass. Clouds of mosquitoes had now put in an appearance and, what with their attentions and the possibility of being caught by an infuriated mamma alligator, I was glad to get off home.

ON the way my friend, as was his wont, turned taciturn and made but short rejoinders to my queries concerning future procedure. But I knew from past experience how to handle him, so, just before reaching the shack where he dwelt, like his saurian friends, in solitary style—except, perhaps, when he heard a mating-call—I suggested refreshment at a near-by rum-shop. The offer was accepted and consummated.

We then repaired to his dwelling, which was typical, in size and structure, of the more respectable negro habitation, but inside it was exceptionally clean and tidy. The working-bench where he stuffed and prepared his specimens was well-placed beneath the window, whilst on each side were shelves holding tools, tins of varnish, and what not, as well as a number of finished exhibits ready for sale.

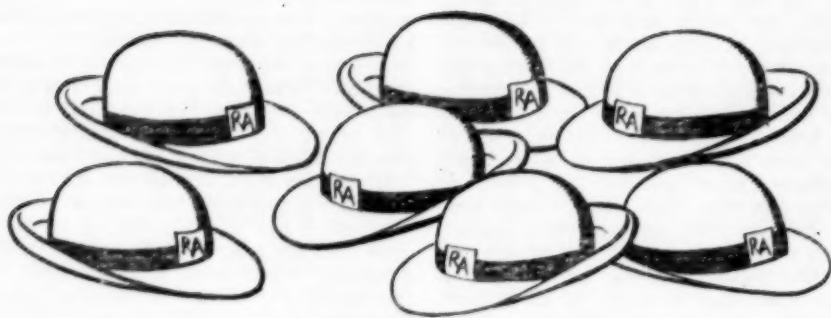
In a corner of the room was a large bed, from beneath which Pile now dragged out one of several boxes which he apparently stored there. It was empty, but certain bold lettering on its sides made it clear that it had once contained sundry bottles of a well-known

brand of, well, you must know . . . Into this receptacle were transferred the eggs which we had stolen that afternoon, and they were now deposited in loose layers surrounded by damp sawdust. 'What's the great idea?' I queried the worthy Professor. He explained to me that, kept in this manner, the eggs, if fresh, should hatch in about two and a half months.

It was then that I realised that the stuffed and beautifully-arranged tiny alligators which, *inter alia*, I had seen him offering for sale came from the eggs which he collected and incubated. Simple, when you know how. I then and there procured from one of the other boxes reposing beneath the couch half-a-dozen eggs, which, I was assured, were due to hatch in the not too distant future.

When I got back home I got hold of a suitable box, carefully arranged the spoil therein, and placed the outfit on a convenient table in my sanctum. One morning a few weeks later I was writing a letter in this room when I became aware of a faint, continuously-repeated creaking sound. It emanated, I found, from no less than three freshly-emerged young alligators, which were crawling about on the table. I coaxed them into a shallow tray of water. I use the word 'coax' for the reason that these nine-inch bundles of wickedness, exact miniature replicas of their elder and infinitely more wicked parents, unhesitatingly snapped at an intruding finger, and their jaws were generously armed with sharp little teeth. Once in the water, the youngsters seemed quite happy and floated, motionless, staring balefully at their foster-parent. Making a start with scraps of raw meat, it was not long before they learnt to tackle small fish and frogs. On such a diet they more than doubled their size well within the year. Eventually, as a penalty for their having got out of hand—as well as *into* hand on more than one occasion—I had to give them up to the Professor for 'treatment'.

I do not know whether friend Pile still hunts and hawks. I have a photograph of him, though. He smiles as he holds in his hands an alligator which he has just caught. At his feet lie the basket and rod. Naturalist and gentleman—*Ave atque vale*.



Oh My Hat!

HENRY J. PETTIFER

MISS BANISTER, the headmistress of Rushton Academy for Young Ladies, was a woman of high ideals and strong character. Indeed, these qualities were essential to the great work to which she had dedicated her life—namely the education and training of young ladies of gentle birth, a task for which she was eminently fitted owing to her peculiar features, which made her quite unsuitable for any form of matrimony. Her unwavering devotion to duty, however, had gained the academy a great name in the world of education, and the syllabus, which had been compiled by Miss Banister with exquisite care, described at length the uplifting influence which the school would have on its fortunate pupils. Elocution, deportment, Greek dancing, music, French and the classical languages were but a few of the subjects calculated to make every young lady a woman to be looked up to when she confidently entered the world outside.

At this moment Miss Banister was peering through the window of her study at a small girl performing a peculiar dance at the school gate. The dance consisted of a hop, a skip, a twist, and a jump accompanied by clapping both hands above her head. This unusual demonstration of agility was being observed

with great interest by two aged rustics, a newspaper boy, and a small unkempt dog of uncertain breed. Miss Banister's thin lips were quivering with passion at this disgraceful lack of decorum in the presence of the populace—and by a child meant for higher things! In addition to this criminal behaviour, the small girl was hatless, and it was this infringement of the school discipline which was making the poor lady's face undergo several rapid changes of colour together with an ominous quickening of the pulse. In other words, Miss Banister was furious.

Her silent vigil was suddenly interrupted by the entry of Miss Faulkner, her ageing first assistant, who had a passion for wearing her hair very long and who possessed several sets of silk underwear in her wardrobe drawer. She was greatly addicted to reading the sporting page of the evening papers owing to an unlucky love affair with a jockey at the age of thirty-nine. She now stood nervously before the headmistress, who eyed her with obvious distaste. 'Miss Banister,' she said in great distress, 'the girls should have assembled ten minutes ago.'

'Before we discuss the visit to Abercony Castle, Miss Faulkner,' said Miss Banister icily, 'I shall be obliged if you will kindly tell

me the name of that child whom I observe misconducting itself at the school gate.'

Miss Faulkner looked fearfully over the headmistress's shoulder and said in a scandalised voice. 'I believe it is Belinda Shortbread, one of the new admissions.'

'As I thought,' said Miss Banister. 'Are you aware, Miss Faulkner, that the child is completely hatless? How many times have I given strict instructions that no child is to be seen either at the school gate or in town without a hat? Summon her into my presence instantly for the reprimand she so richly deserves. Go, Miss Faulkner. No apologies, please—only go at once.'

The rapid and flurried departure of Miss Faulkner was shortly followed by her second appearance with the juvenile delinquent Belinda Shortbread, a child with a wizened face and prominently-protruding teeth.

'Child,' said Miss Banister severely, 'where is your hat?'

'My hat's been took,' said the child shyly.

'Always address me as madam,' said Miss Banister sternly, 'and never say "took" when you mean "taken". Moreover, don't talk nonsense. How could anyone take your hat? Go back to your dormitory and return with your hat immediately.'

'Yes, ma'am,' said the unfortunate Belinda, and was hastily hustled out of the room.

'How utterly disgraceful, Miss Faulkner!' said Miss Banister. 'Think of the reputation of the school. That child has been observed without a hat by the townsfolk. We must be careful, Miss Faulkner. The slightest deviation from etiquette must inevitably bring us into disrepute.'

'Yes, Miss Banister,' said Miss Faulkner humbly. 'I must be more strict in future.'

'Indeed I should think so,' said the headmistress tartly. 'And now, what about the visit to the castle?'

'I was just about to say, Miss Banister, that the girls should have been here at nine o'clock with notebooks and mackintoshes. They are now fifteen minutes late.'

'Good heavens! What is this academy coming to! That this should happen after my lecture on Punctuality in the Recreation Room on Friday! Where are they, Miss Faulkner? Summon them at once. There are limits to my endurance.'

'Ah,' cried Miss Faulkner joyfully, 'I see them. They are approaching in good order along the First Terrace.'

At this happy news Miss Banister turned to look out of the window, and with a sudden shriek of horror collapsed into the arms of her astonished assistant. She opened her eyes for a moment and, fixing Miss Faulkner with an accusing stare, whispered in a broken voice: 'Miss Faulkner—their hats. Where are their hats? Not a single child is wearing its hat.'

Miss Faulkner placed her unfortunate headmistress on to a chair and looked once more through the study window. It was only too true—not a single member of the academy was wearing her hat. Such a ghastly situation had never occurred in the whole of Miss Faulkner's thirty years' experience. She was utterly perplexed.

THE column of girls was led by little Miss Pritchett, the P.T. mistress, and came smartly to a halt on the green. A loud excited chattering broke out immediately, and Miss Faulkner sprang to the window, and, lifting up protesting hands, made frantic signs for silence. 'Hist!' she whispered, 'hist! Our poor Miss Banister is unwell. She has been overcome and now reclines in a trance in her study chair, and the cause of her sudden illness is this unseemly behaviour. Where are your hats, you wicked girls? Don't all speak at once. You, Christina Mattock, why are you hatless?'

'Please, miss,' said a tall gawky girl, 'some blighter's pinched all our hats.'

'Really, Christina,' said Miss Faulkner, deeply shocked, 'your language is simply appalling. I presume you mean some person has hidden them?'

'That's right, miss,' said the girl with a giggle. 'We've looked everywhere and we can't find them.'

Miss Faulkner was about to pursue her inquiries, when she became aware of Miss Banister standing behind her. That lady had recovered from the terrible blow she had sustained and was now looking with menacing eyes at the smiling faces of the girls below. 'Allow me, Miss Faulkner,' she said harshly, 'allow me to address these persons. Pray kindly step aside and I will deal with these miscreants.'

At the appearance of Miss Banister the girls instantly adopted an attitude of respectful silence. The headmistress surveyed them majestically and, after a terrifying pause, began to speak in the manner of a captain addressing

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a mutinous crew. 'Never in all my life,' she said, 'never in the worst moments of the Suffragette Movement have I beheld such unladylike behaviour. Perhaps such goings-on occur abroad in less civilised countries, but this, girls, this is England, and no proper lady is ever seen without a hat. All eyes are upon us and in our struggle for equality we must not forget our dignity as members of the gentler, though not the weaker, sex. So shocked am I at what I can only describe as an outrage that I must consult my staff before deciding what punishment is fitting for such a grave lapse of good taste.'

She was about to make a gesture of dismissal, when little Miss Pritchett intervened, saying in an exceedingly feeble voice: 'Miss Banister, it is perfectly outrageous, I know, but someone has actually taken the hats. They are nowhere to be found.'

There was a ghastly silence as everyone waited for the significance of this statement to sink in. Miss Banister stood for a full minute speechless, and then said in a strangled voice: 'Miss Pritchett,' and she eyed that young lady severely, 'am I to understand that two hundred and fifty hats have been taken away by some person or persons unknown?'

'They have vanished, Miss Banister,' said Miss Pritchett, and added, 'into thin air.'

'For such a large number of hats to vanish into thin air, Miss Pritchett, is, as any textbook on physics will tell you, a practical impossibility.'

Having thus suitably put Miss Pritchett in her place, Miss Banister dismissed the girls and gave hasty instructions to Miss Faulkner to search everywhere for the missing objects. 'Consider this as a grave emergency, Miss Faulkner,' she said. 'Leave no stone unturned. If this is some mischievous jape, some girlish prank, the culprit will be dismissed from the school without mercy. But I suspect some more sinister motive, in which case we shall have to enlist the services of the village constable, a man, I fear, of doubtful intellectual capacity.'

THE efforts of the devoted Miss Faulkner, were, however, in vain. After searching every cupboard, locker, tuckbox, desk, and wardrobe in the school, not a single hat was found. Every girl was employed to look under beds, peer up chimneys, rummage in the attic, examine the coal-cellar, and investigate any

vessel or receptacle that might contain a hat. No object resembling any kind of headgear was brought to light, although Mary Pemberton discovered Miss Pritchett's private diary in the P.T. cupboard—an event which caused great delight to the senior girls in the top form.

Miss Banister was exceedingly distracted and summoned Jarvis, the school caretaker, to her study. He was a large ungainly man, slow of speech and addicted to strong drink. His greatest rival was O'Flanagan, the school gardener, with whom he carried on a feud of the utmost ferocity.

'Jarvis,' said Miss Banister, 'as you know, an occurrence has taken place in the school which is causing us all a great deal of concern.'

'Yes,' said Jarvis surlily, 'the girls' 'ats 'ave been stolen.'

'That is so,' said the headmistress. 'Now, have you seen any suspicious character prowling about or entering the school premises?'

'The only suspicious character I seen,' said Jarvis, 'is that there O'Flanagan. 'E's always prowling about, 'e is. Knocking off girls' 'ats is just 'is line.'

'But what on earth would he do with them?' asked Miss Banister in a surprised voice.

'Flog 'em, o' cos,' said Jarvis. 'Sell 'is old grandmother, 'e would, for 'arf-a-crown. Never seen 'im in a place o' worship, I 'aven't. Vicar sez to me the other day, "That O'Flanagan" 'e sez, "drunk and disorderly 'e was last Sunday evening—dancing along the street when 'e should 'ave been on 'is knees." Which just shows you what 'e is, ma'am.'

'I cannot think he could be responsible for the wholesale theft of such a large number of hats,' said Miss Banister firmly. 'He has always seemed sober and trustworthy to me.'

'That's 'cos you don't know 'im, ma'am,' said Jarvis bitterly. 'Irish 'e is and full o' blarney. 'E does 'is bit o' gardening by day, but what 'e does by night is another story. I seen 'im coming 'ome at one o'clock in the morning with 'is pockets full o' some strange objects.'

'What kind of objects?' asked Miss Banister curiously.

'Ah, that 'ud be telling,' said Jarvis mysteriously, 'but they was objects with wings and feathers, and I reckon they was once strutting about on Squire Manson's farm 'appy like to be alive. Poacher, that's what O'Flanagan is, ma'am. It's bred in the bone, 'e can't 'elp it.'

'H'm,' sniffed Miss Banister, 'he's a good gardener and I've had no complaints from the

squire. Perhaps we had better leave it at that, Jarvis. I will send for O'Flanagan—perhaps he knows something.'

AFTER the sullen departure of Jarvis, the gardener was called to Miss Banister's room. He was a tall gaunt man, with a hooked nose and a pair of sparkling blue eyes. He stood clad in stained brown overalls and gardener's boots, shuffling from one foot to the other. His head was covered with an incredibly foul and battered hat, and it was this object which first caught Miss Banister's eye.

'O'Flanagan,' she said sharply, 'kindly remove your hat when you enter my room.'

O'Flanagan doffed the offensive headgear with a smirk, revealing a mop of bright-red hair, and spoke in a musical voice. 'Sure, an' I begs your pardon, miss,' he said. 'It's habit an' so it is. I never takes it off in the house even. It's become part o' meself an' so it has.' He surveyed the hat with affection. 'Times I've gone to bed still wearing it, like I do me false teeth. It's habit, miss, if's you'll forgive a poor ignorant man talking so freely wid a lady like yerself an' all.'

'It's about hats I wish to speak, O'Flanagan,' said Miss Banister.

'An' yer couldn't chose a better subject to talk about,' O'Flanagan cried eagerly, 'an' I'd be after telling yer that this old hat has been in the O'Flanagan family for generations, passed down from father to son since time untold. Why, 'tis said in old Ireland to this very day that the King o' Killarney was wearing it at the battle o' Ballyhoura Dyke.'

'From its deplorable condition,' said Miss Banister dryly, 'I should have placed its origin at a much earlier date.'

'Deplorable, is it?' said O'Flanagan. 'It's meself that's telling yer honour that this hat was found in the Hall o' Tara when me noble ancestor Cuchullin met his death at the hands o' Seamus O'Brien.'

'It is not *your* hat I wish to discuss,' said Miss Banister firmly, 'and if you have now finished your flight into Irish phantasy you may care to know that the girls' hats have gone.'

'An' very wise o' yer ladyship to be sure,' cried O'Flanagan heartily, 'an' mighty honoured I am to hear the good news from yer own sweet lips, for such hideous hats on the innocent heads o' young females have never

been seen since the blessed saints visited the Emerald Isle.'

'You misunderstand me, O'Flanagan,' said Miss Banister with a frown. 'The hats, which I have always considered most becoming, are missing. They have disappeared.'

'Faith, an' I knew it,' cried O'Flanagan excitedly. 'With these very eyes I saw 'em last Sunday night—the little people in the wood all dancing and jigging they were to the music of the fiddle and each one wearing a hat with a shamrock in it.'

'According to Jarvis, you were completely intoxicated last Sunday night,' said Miss Banister, 'and, in any case, no well-conducted English fairy would dream of wearing a shamrock. All I wish to know is whether you have seen any suspicious person lurking about.'

'Suspicious is it?' said O'Flanagan. 'An' if it wasn't Jarvis himself climbing over me garden fence last night an' having a go at me gooseberries, may Saint Patrick call me a liar to me face.'

'This is getting us nowhere,' said Miss Banister wearily. 'It is quite obvious that neither you nor Jarvis has the slightest knowledge of any misconduct in the building. You may go.'

O'FLANAGAN replaced the historic hat on his head and shuffled to the door, and was nearly knocked down by the excited entry of Miss Faulkner. She was panting with excitement, and for a moment could not speak.

'Compose yourself,' said her headmistress, 'and before you attempt to speak open the door again and make sure that O'Flanagan is not listening at the keyhole.'

Miss Faulkner dutifully opened the door, but the whimsical Irishman had gone, and, sinking uninvited into a chair by the window, she waved a little book in front of Miss Banister. 'It's all in here,' she cried. 'But how terrible, how utterly ghastly! What could she have been thinking of?'

'Before you ask me any more riddles, Miss Faulkner,' said Miss Banister, 'kindly inform me of the exact nature of that little volume which you are so wildly waving about.'

'It's her diary,' said Miss Faulkner. 'Everything's in it. Even her most private thoughts and desires are in this little book. How little we know that woman, Miss Banister. How little we know that poor, wicked, deluded woman.'

'Stop it at once,' said Miss Banister sharply.

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'You are overacting, Miss Faulkner. Come down to earth at once. What woman are you talking about?'

'Why, Miss Pritchett, of course,' said Miss Faulkner, as though this had been obvious from the start. 'The girls found her diary and have solved the mystery of the missing hats.'

'They should be severely punished for not returning the diary unopened,' said Miss Banister. 'I am sure that when I was a girl no one would have opened my diary, which was full of the most intimate things, for I was somewhat precocious and knew quite a lot for my age.'

'I am sure you did,' said Miss Faulkner in admiration, 'but what a good thing they did. Listen to this entry made on Sunday June 6th: "As I stood by the well, the idea suddenly came to me. At last I shall be revenged." She must mean the old disused well behind the orchard.'

'How very sinister,' said Miss Banister with a shudder. 'The mere mention of wells makes my blood run cold. Many years ago I was acquainted with a charming young man who actually threw himself down a well of considerable depth, and I feel that I in some way was responsible for his untimely end. But proceed, Miss Faulkner.'

'I hardly dare utter the next entry,' said Miss Faulkner, her lips trembling.

'Nonsense! Do not be so coy, Miss Faulkner. Nothing can shock a woman of my experience.'

'Very well,' said Miss Faulkner obediently. 'She wrote this on Monday, which was yesterday, of course: "I shall remove the hats from the lobbies to-night. Perhaps two or three journeys will be necessary, but I am determined to humiliate Miss B. utterly. She shall be crushed and shattered. She shall be cast down from a great height."'

'Good heavens!' said Miss Banister in consternation. 'How could she write such things about me, a respectable spinster of forty-nine with a distinguished academic record. To be cast down from a great height, indeed!'

'Most injurious to the health, I should imagine,' said Miss Faulkner sympathetically.

'This wounds me deeply, Miss Faulkner. As you know, I am exceedingly sensitive and very easily hurt.'

'You are indeed, my dear Miss Banister, you are indeed,' cried the first assistant, the tears springing to her eyes.

'But how could I have aroused such male-

volence in this foolish young woman? It is not in my nature to cause offence to any living creature.'

'You were somewhat severe with her on Open Day,' said Miss Faulkner nervously.

'Indeed, I should think so,' said Miss Banister firmly. 'Girls in the Upper Sixth performing cartwheels in public and in front of Sir Bernard Upshott, to whom such bacchanalian behaviour must have seemed positively indecent.'

'Alas,' said Miss Faulkner sadly, 'she must have taken your words to heart, for the last entry in the diary reveals the dark innermost depths of her tormented soul. She writes: "I could hardly stop myself screaming with joy when I saw her face. I am exultant! I am triumphant! How are the mighty fallen!"'

'If I am not mistaken,' said Miss Banister grimly, 'that last sentence is a Biblical quotation, and comes most inaptly from the pen of one so utterly perverted and depraved.'

'Indeed,' said Miss Faulkner dreamily. 'Who knows what mysterious thoughts are floating through the misty subconscious of our minds?'

'Pull yourself together, Miss Faulkner,' said the headmistress sharply. 'I know what thoughts are floating through my mind at the present moment. You have two tasks to perform before the break of another day. First, you will request Miss Pritchett to come to my room immediately, when I will deal with her as the circumstances demand.'

'As you say, Miss Banister.'

'Then, after Lights Out you will enlist the services of Jarvis and O'Flanagan and proceed to the well with hoisting-tackle, flares, and any other implements necessary for retrieving hats. You will personally supervise the operation, for anything might happen with those two near a well.'

'Yes,' said Miss Faulkner faintly, her heart palpitating at the thought of being alone with two men at dead of night. With a deep sigh she closed the door behind her and left the injured Miss Banister to compose the opening speech of the interview which should presently devastate the unfortunate Miss Pritchett.

IT should be recorded that owing to the engineering feats of Jarvis and the heroic efforts of the gallant O'Flanagan the missing hats were once more restored to their rightful places in the lobbies, little the worse for wear.

OH MY HAT !

The dastardly conduct of Miss Pritchett, however, was kept a close secret between Miss Banister and Miss Faulkner, and the enterprising young P.T. mistress was never seen again in the precincts of the college.

Peace reigned once more over Rushton

Academy, with the young ladies decently and becomingly attired in hats suitable to their gentle birth, and the generous education so admirably planned by Miss Banister was allowed to proceed without further interruption.

The Lost Hound

*Lost as a puzzled spirit questing round,
So lost is he, young solitary hound—
And, sitting down, a puppy in his plight,
He lifts a muzzle, heavy as a beam, and bays
Grief to the coming night.*

*At that deep bell a shiver thrills the spine,
The ancient terror through the cave's mouth gapes;
Roused in the blood, our ancestors have heard. His noble line
Spoke with those cello strings when men communed like apes.*

*The gloaming stares, and in its chilling ray
His eyes are listening, inward and remote,
As hypnotised he hears the hidden play
Of some primeval tuning-fork that gives him note.*

*Solid as a monument, self-planted in the lane,
He sorrows with the ages, call on call,
Until man's first imaginings come forth again,
Fear is awake, and fierce looking lurks behind the wall.*

*Until I know, the night's no longer safe,
I long for light and hearth, and friendly cheer,
And yet I cannot leave this splendid wall,
But he draws off, nor coaxing brings him near.*

*'Enigma, wait! See—here is a subtle drag.'
He sniffs suspicion, takes, and comes for more.
Lured by a tea-treat in a shopping-bag,
He hunts the crumpet to a friendly door.*

*But I, still haunted by that call sublime,
Know him a pacing mystery, eyes agleam;
For we had looked together through a rift in Time,
And in the twilight shared a double dream.*

*Not till we pass the threshold of the door,
And only then, the image goes to ground,
Leaving simplicity to take the floor,
A hungry puppy visitor, eyes round.*

*And so—housed, comforted, a crumpet-hound,
Kennels acquainted, all put right—
He and his wondrous voice shall stay the night.*

EGAN MACKINLAY.

Twice-Told Tales

LXI.—Seconds Out!

[From *Chambers's Journal* of January 1856]

SINCE my arrival in Australia, I have often thought to myself when, wearied by the mad bustle of the public, I put my fiddle into its case: 'Well, there can be nothing more new for me in the way of adventure'; but, on coming to another town, I have always found myself mistaken.

Obliged to throw myself upon the manager of a theatre—for I found, on my arrival, that all the concert-rooms were already hired—I bound myself to play for him on twelve successive nights. My first appearance was to take place in the last days of May; and the papers having puffed me enthusiastically for weeks, and public curiosity being raised to the highest pitch, the house was full to suffocation.

A ballet was to precede the concert. The curtain rose. A French dancer, an elegant supple young lady, of no great beauty, but much expression, and apparently on perfectly good terms with herself, appeared on the scene in her short lace-dress, received by an outburst of applause and by the martial trumpets of the orchestra. But from the other side came a youthful blooming Spanish Creole, with beautiful eyes, large and soft; her complexion rosy, her figure tall—in fact, the very impersonation of Terpsichore. She bowed modestly—it was her first appearance at Melbourne—and the enthusiasm of the public, surprised by her beauty, manifested itself in vehement cheers.

The two dancers struggled for the palm of victory in a graceful tarentula. Like two glittering butterflies, they whirled around, accompanied by music and applause. The mercurial Parisian made use of all her most seductive wiles, of her most refined pirouettes, of her most enchanting attitudes; but the Creole seemed patronised by the Graces them-

selves. Thundering applause encouraged her; and as often as she came forward with her graceful modesty, nosegays, and rings, and bracelets were thrown at her feet. The French lady struggled with her last strength against the triumph of her rival, until, disheartened and exhausted, she fell to the ground.

The Creole approached her with compassion to raise her, when suddenly the Parisian darted up, and, with looks full of hate and fury, boxed the ears of her rival. The audience hissed and hooted, while she exclaimed with passion: 'The wretch tripped me!' The poor Creole declared with dignity that she was innocent of the meanness; but a vulgar word, which slipped out of the lips of the French dancer against her, suddenly roused all the passions of the South in her bosom, and a singular struggle began. The two excited ladies rushed upon each other, and wrestled and tore and pulled one another's hair, while the thunders of the gallery made the whole atmosphere vibrate. I never saw a more natural performance. The better classes of the public did not interfere, but seemed rather to be amused by these not entirely Olympic exercises, until the Creole, bleeding and fainting, was carried away from the scene.

Some officers who, from a box, had witnessed the spectacle, were revolted at the conduct of the Parisian, and sent for the police to arrest her; but her friends collected and resisted the constables. A riot ensued; a portion of the public rushed on the stage; they jumped across the orchestra; the fiddles and bass viols were broken; ladies were fainting; children crying; and I—I took to my heels with my fiddle, and ran away without stopping till I reached my hotel. 'Farewell Melbourne!' exclaimed I.



The Double-Bladed Lie

MARY JANE WALDO

IN the window of Hardinger's Hardware the knives were spread in a bristly crescent on green crepe paper. The early morning sun struck dazzling flashes from the husky hunting-knives beside their leather sheaths, the Boy Scout knives with all the cunning hooks and corkscrews. Timothy looked long and carefully at all these. He was not in the least interested in them. He was merely postponing the exquisite moment when he would enter Hardinger's and claim his own—his double-bladed knife.

When at last he went in, he found Mr Hardinger back by the cash-register, sorting screws into a muffin tin. 'Mornin', son,' said Mr Hardinger. 'What can I do fer you?'

'I came for my knife,' said Timothy.

'Well, now,' said Mr Hardinger. He looked at the boy. Timothy Wood was not what is called a pretty little boy. He was eight years old, but you might have thought him five. At one end of his bony little body there was a pair of tremendous feet in heavy-duty shoes, and at the other end a blond crew cut. His long, protruding upper-lips made him look something like a blond monkey, and he stuck his stomach out habitually in a futile attempt at holding up his jeans.

He hitched his jeans now, while Mr

Hardinger rummaged in a drawer and brought out the knife. He turned it this way and that, squinting at it, while Timothy writhed with eagerness to hold it in his hand. At last Mr Hardinger handed the knife to Timothy. 'How d'you like that, eh? Pretty fair job?' he asked.

Timothy studied the name-plate. 'Timothy Wood', it was inscribed. 'That's swell, Mr Hardinger,' he said.

'That'll be four dollars and seventy-five cents,' said Mr Hardinger.

Timothy took out the five-dollar bill and laid it on the counter proudly.

'Where'd you come by all that money, son?' asked the storekeeper.

'My dad sent it to me for my birthday,' said Timothy.

This was not strictly true. In fact, it was strictly false according to the letter of the truth, though by the spirit some would have called it true. Timothy saw two scenes in his mind, and one had happened only last Saturday. 'He'll be eight to-morrow,' his mother had said, making one of her little faces. 'Imagine me having a kid eight years old.' Then one of the uncles—one of the many uncles who had shown up suddenly as soon as his father was gone—had tossed

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Timothy the five-dollar bill. 'Buy yourself something, kid,' he had said. 'You're only eight once.'

The other scene was long, long ago. Timothy was not sure how old he was then, but his father had been there, so it was before the divorce and before his father's sickness. His father was whittling a boat for Timothy. He looked up from the whittling, and the shadows of the maple-tree in the back-yard were on his face. 'When you're bigger I'll teach you how,' he said. 'On your eighth birthday I'll buy you the finest knife you ever saw. Every boy should have one on his eighth birthday.'

Timothy's dad always meant what he said, but maybe in the hospital, far away in the desert, they couldn't get knives. You would think, though, that they'd have birthday cards.

NOW Timothy took his twenty-five cents change and charged out of the hardware store in order to get to school on time. He was scared of the kids at school, but maybe things would get better now that he had the knife. It was cold and smooth in his hand, splendid in nickel and pearl. It was only from Hardinger's, but it was a fine knife . . .

He kept it in his pocket during school hours, for he did not wish it to be added to the yo-yos and other prizes which filled Miss Orr's desk-drawers. He was the man of the hour at the interval; when he headed home at three o'clock he was glorying in his new popularity and he was followed by a little knot of his fellow third-graders.

The eighth-graders had been let out early to-day. But they were hanging around, looking for something to do. One of them—one of the biggest—came up to Timothy and said in a gentle voice: 'Can I see your knife?'

Usually Timothy would have been suspicious, but just now he was flattered. 'I guess so,' he said, and handed it over.

The big boy grabbed it. 'I guess so,' he mimicked in a high voice. He looked the knife over, noting the inscription 'Timothy Wood'; he said daintily. 'Timothy would what?'

His friends thought this very funny and laughed loudly. They tossed Timothy's knife from one to another, pretending to hide it in their pockets.

Timothy waited while they had their fun.

He was scared, but he wanted his knife. The other third-graders had run away; they knew better than to hang around when the big kids were acting tough.

It probably wouldn't have taken long, but from the schoolyard half a block away there suddenly came the cry of 'Fight! Fight!' and all the eighth-graders rushed back to the yard, yelling. Timothy had to go too; he wanted his knife.

The fight was a free-for-all and pretty rough. Timothy hovered nervously on the edge of the scuffle, wishing he were somewhere else, but anxious to get his knife back. Then he saw something small and bright hurtle through the air. It landed on the ground near the brawlers, and after a minute one of them screamed in pain and surprise. The scream came from a big kid who was clutching at his arm. A small trickle of blood was running down his shirt-sleeve.

Boys scattered in all directions. Timothy's legs wanted to run too, but that was his own knife, on the ground again now. He stopped to pick it up. The door of the schoolhouse was flung open and all the teachers came running out. The principal, a large man and an angry one, led the attack. There was no one left by this time but Timothy and the boy with the hurt arm. Together they were led into the school, down the brown-painted corridor, and into the principal's office.

'Let me see that,' the principal said.

Timothy handed him the knife.

'Where did you get this knife?' demanded the principal.

'My dad gave it to me for my birthday,' said Timothy.

'But I thought—you live with your mother, don't you, Timothy?'

'My dad sent it to me,' said Timothy stubbornly.

'Well. Did you cut Harold with the knife?'

'That little kid?' broke in Harold derisively. 'Nah, it wasn't him. It was Bullock. I don't know who threw him the knife.'

'Did you give Bullock your knife, Timothy?' asked the principal.

'No, sir,' said Timothy, hitching up his jeans.

'Who did, then?'

'I don't know. I just saw it fly through the air—' Timothy paused. He knew they didn't believe him.

There was another thing too. Timothy felt

THE DOUBLE-BLADED LIE

guilty because he had lied, and the guilt was spreading out inside him to encompass all guilt for all sins ever committed. Maybe he had given Bullock his knife. Maybe he had even cut Harold.

'We've had too many of these things happening this year, Timothy,' said the principal. 'We can't let it go on. I know how you must value this knife your father sent you, but I'll have to keep it until the end of the year. You may go home now.'

OUTSIDE, the afternoon sun had vanished in a chill haze. Timothy's legs were trembling as he walked home, and he was sick to his stomach.

His mother was never home from her job when Timothy got home from school. He put his hand into the letter-box to get the key. There was something else in the letter-box. It was a letter for Timothy, from his father.

He tore it open and read it there on the porch; he ate it up. His dad did not send many letters, and in each one the writing was a little bit worse, but you could read it: 'I'm sorry to get this off too late for your birthday, but things are hard to manage in here. I've had my scouts out, though, and they've finally found just the knife I wanted for you. It'll be along in a day or so. Remember long ago, when I told you what every boy should have for his eighth birthday?'

The rest was stuff to make you laugh, about the doctors and nurses, and then the same ending as always: 'Take care of your mother.' He would try to take care of her. He always tried.

Timothy stood there on the porch. The sun had come back out and the faith which had lately gone out of Timothy came flowing back. He was fiercely glad that he had lost the knife from Hardinger's. It had been nothing but a lie anyway. A double-bladed lie.

Ennui

*What fools are we to endure the dull routine of the day,
To bury our dreams in a ledger, while over the way
There's a broad-hipped gipsy woman and a swarthy man,
And a rabble of pagan babies in a painted caravan,
With carpets and baskets and chairs and brushes and brooms hung over,
And a grandam, wizened and wasted, contentedly sitting inside,
Dozing and dreaming of days so long dead and her lover,
And the moon that hung out of heaven on the night that he died!*

*What fools are we to be chained to a bunch of keys,
When there in the street is a sailor from over the seas,
With his broad bare chest tattooed with memories of old Japan,
A sugar-loaf mountain, a cedar, a fish, and an open fan!
And here in the gutter is a dirty Italian man,
With eyes like a saint or a child, and with rings in his ears,
With a monkey for mate, and he grinds and he bows and he leers,
And thinks of his old mother begging on the steps of a church in Milan.*

*What fools are we to be copying such entries as these
In a loose-leaf ledger with a clasp that shuts like a vice!
Oh, gold and silver and ivory! Oh, peacocks and chimpanzees!
Oh, ginger and raisins and pepper, molasses and sugar and spice!
Oh, Ophir and Sheba and Sidon! Oh, coral and pearl and lagoons!
Oh, monkeys and Moslems and mangroves and myrrh and monsoons!
Oh, anything that doesn't smell musty or mouldy or stale!
Oh, magical words that can shatter the walls of my jail!
But what had I done so amiss to deserve all this present pain
When I was Tamerlane's bodyguard or Solomon's chamberlain?*

FREDERIC L. MITCHELL.

Romance of the Copperbelt

JOHN WILLIAMSON

JUST over twenty-eight years ago—in October 1927—Alfred Chester Beatty, the eminent mining-engineer and financier, addressed the first meeting of a Rhodesian copper-mining concern and expressed, with some caution, his confidence in the outcome of this new venture.

Here, on a barren, tree-speckled plateau, three hundred miles north of the Victoria Falls, near the Congo border, lay one of the richest sulphide deposits known to man. Yet so inaccessible had been its location that only in comparatively recent years had large-scale mining become possible and the area developed into what is now the third-largest copperbelt in the world.

It is interesting to recall something of the risk and toil that first went into this project. Fortunes were swiftly made and lost round the boreholes on the Copperbelt, though wise exploitation of the mineral rights has since led to ever-expanding prosperity. To date, there has been produced nearly 250 million pounds' worth of copper, upon which is based practically the whole economy of this vast region.

TO pick up the beginnings of this story it is necessary to go back to 1902, when William Collier, an agent of Rhodes, trekking northwards across the Zambesi, suddenly and unexpectedly hit the Copperbelt. The rapid and effective occupation of unknown territory, north and west of the Boer republics, was of utmost importance to the British Empire. The mineral potential of an undeveloped land was quickly realised by other powers in Europe, and Germany was a serious rival in this strategic scramble for Africa. In the '70's and '80's it had been diamonds and gold; now the limitless hinterland of Africa held out other tempting possibilities.

It was after months of lonely wandering through fever-ridden tsetse-fly country that

William Collier discovered the whereabouts of copper deposits. The story is typical of the hit-and-miss romanticism which so often surrounds the life of a prospector. One night an old native walked into the camp and asked the white man if he would shoot some meat for him. Scenting information, Collier agreed, and near the Luanshya river he stalked and shot a roan antelope. Kneeling beside the body, he was amazed to see that the rock upon which the animal lay was stained green. It was copper! And the rocky outcrop all around bore vivid traces of this hidden wealth.

Staying only long enough to stake out on behalf of the Rhodesian Copper Company a 10,000-acre claim, which he called 'Roan Antelope', Collier moved up-country to make treaties with tribal chiefs. This took time, but eventually, on the 31st of January 1913—ten years after the discovery—this inhospitable haunt of elephant and buffalo was officially registered with the Secretary for Mines, at Livingstone. Now the genius of Alfred Chester Beatty slowly began to turn this untouched mineral wealth into a commercial reality.

UNDER Chester Beatty's initiative the Rhodesian Selection Trust Limited was formed in 1914, to test-bore the Roan Antelope area and, if possible, select the site for future mining. Traction-engines, drilling equipment, and stores had to be manhandled through the bush, followed by still more machinery brought in ox-wagon and lorry. By 1926, borings at Roan Antelope, and at a second claim called Mufulira, showed the presence of extensive deposits of clean sulphide ore. The dreams of Cecil Rhodes now began to unfold!

In the following year Roan Antelope Copper Mine Limited was incorporated, with an

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initial capital of £600,000. Later were added Mufulira, Nchanga, and Rhokana Mines, names familiar to the investing public. These mines, all in the Chester Beatty group, represent an investment cost of fifty-one million pounds, though their real value to the Commonwealth surpasses mere financial estimation.

Faith in man's ability to plan and set up a vast enterprise almost in the heart of Africa finally established Northern Rhodesia as a great and growing nation. Compared with an annual state revenue in 1931 of not much more than three-quarters of a million pounds, the Budget estimate for last year passed the fourteen-million mark; while the national wealth of the country increased from sixteen million in 1945 to 105 million in 1954.

Test-drilling to production, at Roan Antelope and Mufulira Mines, occupied a further five years. The railhead from the south reached the Copperbelt only in 1929, yet by November 1931—a year of world financial crisis—the first blister copper from the new mines was en route for New Jersey. In 1935, almost twenty years after British, American, and South African capital had started, at great risk, this still uncertain venture, the Company paid its first dividend. By 1939 the world demand for copper was growing, especially for British copper, that did not involve import from dollar countries. Never was this supply so vital as during the war, when copper for the Allies could be mined and smelted safe from enemy attacks.

TO-DAY the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia is highly industrialised, with well-laid-out communities for the African and European workers. There are modern towns, with shops, offices, hospitals, and wide, tree-lined thoroughfares; also a well-organised transport system linking this once-forbidding land with the East, West, and South African coasts. There is small danger to health from malaria and fever, for the Copperbelt, with a climate neither equatorial nor yet sunless, cannot be called 'a white man's grave'.

The copper-mining companies are the largest employers of European and African labour, and the ever-increasing demand for copper has been reflected in the prosperity

which has come to Rhodesia. These mines are among the cheapest producers in the world, and it is not anticipated that there will be any serious fall in the price of copper to affect this thriving new industry.

The popular belief that African labour is cheap, and perhaps to some extent exploited by the mine-owners, is certainly not borne out by the facts. Native miners are to-day paid over twenty pounds, and bonus, for a month's work, and in addition are housed and fed free. This is a substantial wage for men who still lack qualities of leadership and responsibility, and whose value to the mining companies is entirely dependent upon the supervisory skill of the European employees.

To-day 36,000 Africans and 5400 Europeans work the copper-mines, and together with their families bring the mining population to 110,000. With the addition of the adjoining Belgian Katanga, part of the same Copperbelt, the community numbers about a quarter of a million people now thriving on this once-desolate land.

Britain has every reason to be proud of her part in this wonderful achievement, for it was in the City of London that these great companies were first incorporated and for so long administered. Now, due largely to the disparity in United Kingdom and Northern Rhodesian taxation, and the political implications of the new Central African Federation, traditional methods of company direction no longer prove entirely satisfactory.

The break with the Mother Country has long been contemplated and long delayed, and it is with regret that the transfer of all management and control to the area of production has at last proved imperative. As a parting gift, the Rhodesian Selection Trust Group have endowed a Rhodes Chair of Race Relations at Oxford University.

The present group of mines still have an estimated life at full production of fully another thirty-five years, and new mines are expected—towards the end of 1956—to make their contribution to the well-being of Northern Rhodesia.

To-day prospecting teams are again exploring the distant wastelands that lie near the source of the Congo-Zambesi rivers. Will they discover a new and larger Copperbelt? Who knows?



A Man's Pride

YVONNE HULL

ABDUL sat on the verandah gently polishing a pair of shoes. The sun had risen behind him and was hot on the back of his head, but he could not summon the energy to get up and move his stool into the shade. Out of the corner of his eye he could see Iddu, the young Hindu bearer from the upstairs flat, ostentatiously cleaning his master's Humber.

'There, it is well polished, old one, is it not?' said the boy, standing back to admire his work. 'But then it is a car which is a pleasure to polish. It is a real car—not a box on wheels, such as your sahib uses.'

Abdul ground his teeth. Was it not bad enough to be growing old and to be obliged to work for a small-time sahib, without being continually reminded of it? He searched for words that would wound the young Hindu and restore his own dignity, but he could think of nothing adequate. 'But when I worked for the Brigadier Sahib,' he said testily, 'the car I had to look after was twice as big and twice as expensive as your master's.'

The boy laughed. 'This brigadier of yours—will you never cease talking about him? I think he only exists in your imagination.' Jauntily he threw his polishing-cloths across his shoulder and strode off to his quarter.

Abdul put down the shoes and buried his head miserably in his hands. If only the Brigadier Sahib would come back, he thought—if only he would come back! The memory of those other, better days stabbed his heart. No other bearer would have dared to laugh at him then. They had all regarded him with envy and respect—for his Sahib had been more important and extravagant, had run a larger car and had entertained more lavishly than any of their masters. Yes, if the Brigadier Sahib came back young Iddu would be forced to mend his manners. If the Brigadier Sahib came back...

ABDUL'S thoughts were interrupted by the sound of the Memsahib's voice. He thought he heard his name called, but he pretended he had not done so. He felt that he could not face her at that moment.

He hated everything about the Memsahib. He hated her straggly hair, her delicate face, her thin body, her whining voice and, most of all, her timid manner towards him.

English women always made him feel uncomfortable, anyway. With their pretence of equality with their menfolk they seemed to him like children showing off at a party.

A MAN'S PRIDE

That a woman should seek to become a tyrant behind the closed doors of her own home was permissible, but when she sought to become the publicly acknowledged equal of her husband it was only laughable. The Brigadier Sahib had been a wise man: he had had no wife.

'Abdul! Abdul!'

She was calling again. This time her voice was too clear and too annoyed to be ignored. With a sigh he got to his feet, kicked off his shoes, and went in search of her.

He found her in the drawing-room, drumming her thin fingers on the desk. 'Where have you been, Abdul?' she demanded fretfully. 'I have been calling you for ages.'

'I was cleaning shoes on the verandah, memsahib. I regret I did not hear you.'

She sat there biting her lips, wondering if she should scold him. It was so obvious that she was unused to employing a servant. 'Well—well, you should listen, Abdul. I require some ink. Go and fetch some at once. Here is the money—and don't forget to bring back a bill.'

Don't forget to bring back a bill! How often he had heard that during the past few months. Was she so afraid of losing a few miserable annas? The Brigadier Sahib had never quibbled about annas—or about rupees either. The Brigadier Sahib had paid him an allowance at the beginning of each month of as much as fifty rupees to cover petty expenses. And not once had he abused the trust his master had placed in him. True, he had pocketed the difference between prices in the bazaar and prices in the sort of shop into which the Brigadier used to go; but that was only good business.

His mouth was set in a sulky line as he picked up the Memsahib's money and wandered out into the sun. He resolved to go to the most expensive stationer's to buy the ink, in order that she might not gain by her stinginess and lack of trust. However, the sun was already high, and the heat was so intense that he was glad to turn into the first stall he came to.

The stall-keeper fumbled about in a dusty corner and produced a bottle of ink. 'Here you are,' he said, 'just what you want. You should come to my stall more often. I always have just what you want, and I should make you good prices.'

Abdul shrugged his shoulders. 'You must give me a bill,' he said, handing over his money.

'Aha, aha!' chuckled the stall-keeper. 'So your memsahib keeps a check on you, does she? It cannot be so good to be a bearer when one is kept on a leash.'

Abdul tried to look aloof as he waited for the other painstakingly to write out a bill, but his head felt as though it would split with rage. 'Why must I suffer such indignity, such humiliation?' he demanded furiously of himself when he was in the hot street again. But the answer was very simple and was presented to him only too vividly at the next corner. There, squatting outside a bungalow, was an acquaintance of his—one who, in the old days, had served a master almost as important as his own. But now his cheeks were hollow and his clothes were ragged. With nervous fingers he sorted his faded testimonials as he waited for the interview that might bring him work.

One had to face facts. Nowadays there was not enough work. Most of the English sahibs—like the Brigadier—had gone away and would never return. The Hindus, who ruled in their place, preferred to employ Hindu servants; and the English who remained were apt to choose young and handsome bearers, such as young Iddu, rather than older and more experienced men like himself. Yes, nowadays if a man wished to work he had to pocket his pride and take what job he could.

He returned to the flat feeling considerably chastened.

BUT there were further insults in store for Abdul.

'Abdul,' said the Memsahib, in a high, nervous voice, 'there are dirty finger-marks on the door. You must wipe them off at once.'

Finger-marks, finger-marks . . . What could she mean?

She drew aside the curtain and pointed to a greyish patch near the doorknob. But that was quite normal. The door had started off white; it would gradually become grey and dirty; then it would flake—and it would have to be repainted.

'Finger-marks!' she repeated, indicating with her fingers how the dirt had arrived there. He understood what she meant. It seemed quite logical. But whose fingers could have made the marks? The washerman's? The gardener's? The sweeper's? The . . . ?

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

'Memsahib,' he said with horror, 'I cannot clean those off! It—it is not my job.'

'Then whose job is it? The cook's? The sweeper's?'

No, the cook would only keep his kitchen clean, and the sweeper refused to do anything except floors and bathroom fittings. 'Special man,' suggested Abdul.

'Special man, indeed!' exclaimed the Memsahib with unexpected fury. 'I employ three servants in this house, and it is quite enough. You are idle for at least half the day, Abdul; so you can just get a cloth and wipe that door!'

'That not my job, memsahib,' he repeated stubbornly.

'Oh . . . Oh, get out of my sight!'

He walked indignantly out to his stool on the verandah. How could she expect him to do that—to clean off the finger-marks of a sweeper? It really was too much. It took a woman to think of something like that. The Brigadier Sahib would never have noticed fingerprints—or, if he had done so, he would simply have said, 'Get those cleaned off!' and been indifferent as to whether Abdul had done the job himself or employed somebody else to do it.

He sprang up from his stool as the Sahib drove up in his little box-car. A few minutes later he heard voices raised in the flat. So the Memsahib was relating the incident to the Sahib. The significance of his action suddenly became clear to him. He had refused to obey an order—an unreasonable one, but still an order. He had been guilty of what the

Brigadier Sahib used to call 'insubordination'. Supposing that the Sahib supported his memsahib and repeated the order, what should he do? If he refused, it might well mean dismissal, with no more work for many months and much hardship for himself and his family . . .

'Old one—hey, old one!' It was Iddu who called him. 'Look at my master's new dinner-jacket that I have just collected from the tailor's. Is it not a fine thing? He will cut quite a figure at the big reception to-night. Is your sahib going to the reception?'

'No.'

'What? But all the sahibs of any importance were invited!'

'He—he was invited, but he refused. He is unable to go.'

'I do not believe you. I believe that he is not important enough to be invited. He is just a "chota sahib"!'

The boy's words stung Abdul to silence. He was ashamed of having lied—ashamed of having a sahib who was too unimportant to be invited to the big reception. He was so angry that he wanted to hit the young Hindu. But, after all, the boy had only spoken the truth.

A few minutes later the Sahib came to the door and summoned him in an angry voice. But Abdul had made up his mind. It would mean that he would have no work, no money, and very little hope. But at least he would have his pride. And a man's pride was surely the most important thing.

Time

*It surely is ungrateful and a crime
Ever to talk of ways of passing time—
Finding it hard to see one whole day through,
Despite the myriad things there are to do!
I wish that time were marketable stuff,
That those of us who never have enough
Might, through some sound time-broker, get in touch
With those poor wretches who have got too much;
We'd pay all right, not haggle over cost,
Glad that the precious ware should not be lost.
Why, time is capital we should invest
Till every instant has its interest;
How eagerly announcements we should hail
Which advertised: 'An Unused Hour for Sale!'*

W. K. HOLMES.

Science at Your Service

CAR PROTECTION

A ROLL-UP weatherproofed canvas cover for the car is a new invention that has recently reached the marketing stage. It is fixed to the car-roof as simply as, say, a luggage-rack. When the car is to be left exposed, the cover can be unrolled and pulled into place in less than three minutes and by single-handed operations. When no longer required, however, the cover is rolled back into its compact roof situation by automatic spring-rollers. The cover does not merely give an umbrella type of protection to the car; besides this, it has side flaps which reach below the car's waistline. Elastic rubber stays hold the cover firmly in place when it is in place.

This new motoring accessory has a three-fold range of functions. It will protect the car surface from rain during parking, especially useful after the car has been cleaned and polished. It will keep the car cool during parking in hot or close weather. It will give semi-garage protection on any occasion when the car has to be left in the open at night or throughout the night; indeed, for car-owners who are obliged to night-garage their cars in the open regularly or periodically, this ingenious cover seems especially meritorious.

To some extent these covers are tailor-made. Obviously they must vary in shape according to the size and shape of car. The manufacturers offer models to fit all popular makes of car from 1946 onwards, and prices vary accordingly. The covers are being sold through the recognised garage and motor trade.

FOR HOSE COUPLING

Connecting a hose to a household or garden tap is often a tedious operation, and some of the devices employed decline in their efficiency all too soon. This problem has been given fresh study, and an entirely new coupling is now available. It is claimed to be practically unbreakable and durably leakproof. It will fit any $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch water-tap and has no washers. The coupling is composed of four parts—a threaded chrome-steel bush that is fixed to the tap by three small screws, a polished chrome-

steel outer section that screws on to the bush, a conical rubber insert, and a nylon-made connector that is pushed into the hose. The nylon connector has two lugs that engage with bayonet-slots in the outer section attached to the tap. This engagement can be made in a few seconds or less. As the receiving parts of the coupling contain a filter, this section of the total assembly may be left on the tap permanently for anti-splash delivery. It is not unsightly. The price is very moderate.

A POCKET MICROSCOPE

A pocket microscope with plastics-made lenses and the appearance of a rather fat fountain or ball-point pen has the exceptional power of giving twenty-five magnifications. Naturally at this power it has a small field of vision, but there must be many purposes for which this new and convenient optical instrument will be useful. For example, it should be of enormous value to specialised collectors of stamps or coins for examining fine points of detail, or for inspecting woven fibres in the textile industry. It is necessary for the field of vision to be well lit, either naturally or artificially, otherwise focusing with the microscope held in the hand is rather more difficult, but this, of course, applies generally to the precision use of microscopes. For maximum efficiency, a tripod clip which is attached to the vision end can be slipped off and put back in a reversed position; the microscope is then given three projecting feet and, as the clip slides along the body of the instrument, the perfect position for focusing a flat object can be obtained and held. The writer has tested this microscope on a number of objects and its performance can be given the highest praise. Its price is perhaps the most surprising feature—a matter of shillings. A price two or three times as high would not have been unexpected.

The optical system employed is the conventional combination of a single objective-lens and a two-lens Huyghenian eyepiece. The makers are specialised producers of precision optical apparatus.

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

SILENT ROLLER-SKATES

It is possible that only a few readers of this journal are directly interested in roller-skates. However, where enterprising children are in the family, the interest may be strongly indirect, particularly on acoustic grounds. A well-established manufacturer of ball-bearing roller-skates has recently introduced rubber-wheeled skates, which are claimed not only to be much quieter but also safer and more comfortable in use. The main body of the skates is still made of metal, with a finish of nickel-plating.

AN OIL-PEN

A Swiss invention now being marketed here makes the lubricating of household mechanisms or small-parts of machinery a much easier and quicker job. It is a pen-shaped oil-container with a hypodermic-syringe type needle. Pressure on the needle, when in position, releases small but adequate amounts of oil, the rate of flow being directly controlled by the amount of pressure. If too much oil has been released, a sharp release of pressure with the needle still in contact will suck back the surplus. The oil-pen can be operated in any position, even upside down. It is made in three grades, with a normal, medium, or fine needle. The normal needle is designed for general household or machine use—e.g., locks, car hinges, lawn-mowers, bicycles, sewing-machines. The medium needle is more suitable for small electrical or mechanical parts—e.g., typewriters, cine-cameras, clocks. The fine needle is intended for small and high-precision instruments—e.g., watches, miniature cameras.

Refilling the pen with oil is quite simple. The metal nozzle holding the needle mechanism is removed and oil can be run into the container. The needle has a cover of fountain-pen type for protection when not in use; in fact, this appliance can be carried as safely as any pen in the pocket. These oil-pens are made of a translucent plastics material in green, blue, red, or clear colours.

From personal use, the writer can describe this as the kind of household tool that sweeps like a new broom. It is fascinatingly novel as well as being efficient, and encourages a quest for oiling operations in all parts of the house! It replaces the conventional thumb-pressure household oilcan with all possible advantages—ease of use, time-saving, cleanliness, and economy in oil. Its price is attractively low.

PLASTICS FLOOR-TILES

Plastics-made floor tiles are no longer novel, of course; post-war restrictions upon timber for ground-floors helped to widen their use somewhat opportunely. However, it is wrong to regard them as a substitute floor-surfacing material. One of Britain's leading linoleum manufacturers, a Scottish company, has developed an exceptionally varied range of floor-tiles of polyvinyl chloride. This plastics substance, when mixed with the type of additive known as a plasticiser, has rubberlike properties and is remarkably resistant to wear and corrosion by chemicals. Official tests by the Building Research Station showed adequate wear-resistance even for situations where foot traffic will be moderately heavy—e.g., in offices, flats, etc. Household reagents would not stain or otherwise affect the tile surfaces. Any type of floor-polish could be used if polishing was required. Other properties favourably reported were that these tiles were reasonably non-slip, cold to the touch, hard to the tread, and that they had good resistance to indentation.

The tiles are made in two thicknesses. The $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness is recommended for commercial flooring and the $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch thickness for domestic premises. Both types are 9 inches square. Twenty-one different colours, plain or grained, are available at the same price. On larger floor-areas, a range of multi-coloured pattern effects can be secured by using combinations of these tiles. An excellent handbook, fully describing the properties, colours, and methods of fixing and maintenance of these tiles, is available from the manufacturers.

SIMPLE SPRAYING

An insecticide producer has marketed a novel spraying device, a spraycap which, if fitted to any ordinary cycle-pump, converts it into an efficient air-spraying appliance. The spray material is separately supplied in capsules to be fitted into the spraycap. Complete packs containing one spraycap and four capsules, or packs containing six refill capsules, are being marketed. The price per capsule is a matter of pence, and even the complete pack costs no more than a few shillings. In addition to a domestic insecticide which is claimed to control flies, wasps, moths, and other such pests, a room-refreshing substance is also available in this capsule form.

SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE

A FIRE WITH A FAN

A new fire-grate has a small electric blower-fan placed in a chamber under the floor. This fan, though consuming only one unit of power for fifty hours' use, supplies air to the base of the fire at a rate of 1000 cubic feet per hour. The fire will burn continuously whatever grade of fuel is used; it is also unaffected by high winds or the opening of windows or doors. It can be lit with coke, not always an easy operation with ordinary open grates. When slower combustion and smaller heat supply is needed, the fan can be cut off. There is a substantial ash-reception unit below the fire-bars and ash need be cleared only once or twice a week. The finish is in vitreous enamel; 16- and 18-inch models are made. The price is most reasonable, about twice to two and half times that of continuous-burning grates, a difference that is not at all excessive for the extra features. Fan-aided air-supply has been used in industrial furnaces for many years, and the development of the same idea for household fires might well have made earlier progress. It is certainly timely now when solid fuel is so dear and when better means of burning lower-grade coals are so useful.

REGISTRATION NUMBER TAGS FOR CAR KEYS

Small metal-made rectangular tags for attaching to car keys are being made by a British firm. Each tag is individually made to carry the letters and numerals of the car's registration number, the tag being, in fact, a miniature facsimile of the car's number-plate. The remarkable feature of this product is that a tag costs only a few shillings, little more, in fact, than twenty cigarettes. A tag may help to prevent loss of a car key, though many owners overcome the greater loss-risk of so small a key by carrying it on a key-ring. However, if the key is lost, or, worse still, a ring carrying a number of keys, the numbered tag should greatly increase the chances of speedy return. Many of these tags have been bought as presents. It is easy enough to take note of a relation's or friend's car number. As a low-cost but essentially personal present, this car key tag seems difficult to beat.

A COMBINED ELECTRIC-HEATER AND COOLER

A new electric-heater for rooms or offices also incorporates a motor-driven fan; in hot weather, therefore, it can be alternatively used for ventilation and cooling. The design is attractively modern, that of a grille-faced box held within a supporting framework. Both the fan and the heating-element are housed in a steel casing; the grille covers the front of the case. The framework, constructed of welded steel rods, forms an attractive stand for the unit and acts at the same time as a protective guard. However, in household use, the framework could be used for hanging small items of laundry for drying. The case and frame are finished in cream enamel; including the frame, the space occupied is 16 by 14 by 13 inches. The first model offered has a 2000 watt rating, but can also be controlled to give 1000 watt. It is available for 220 to 250 voltages; three feet of three-core cable is provided.

A VEGETABLE-RACK

A new kitchen accessory, made by a firm that specialises in wire house-ware, is a three-tiered vegetable-rack. It provides not only a tidier and space-saving method of storing vegetables, but it also keeps the vegetables fresher by permitting all-round air circulation. The rack has a vertical frame made of stout but light wire; this frame has three sets of hooks for holding three wire circular baskets one above the other. The height of the rack is 30 inches; the floor-space required is only 15 by 13 inches. Despite this economy of space, the rack has a cubic capacity of approximately 800 cubic inches. For distribution and storage, the rack folds flat. It is light to carry, weighing only a few pounds. The finish is in cherry-red for the frame and silver for the three baskets.

This new appliance has proved so useful in space-saving, and is at the same time of such pleasing appearance, that it is also being used by shopkeepers for displaying provisions, carton-packed goods, etc. Its retail price seems remarkably low for its quality of construction.

TO CORRESPONDENTS who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addresses will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, *Chambers's Journal*, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the *Journal* and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given in order to facilitate reference.

Blanched Batavian Endive

MANY people are growing Batavian endive these days because it has the normal lettuce look about it and so is much less unusual than the stag's horn type. There is no difficulty about growing the Batavia; it seems quite happy in any type of soil, though it does like to be grown in land that has been well manured. As to varieties, there is Batavian White, which is most delicate in flavour, Batavian Green, which is perhaps not so crisp and tender; and, lastly, Full Heart, which seems on the whole to produce a larger centre than any other kind—but it takes a little longer to blanch.

The great advantage of all these kinds of endive is, of course, that they can be made available at this time of the year, when lettuce is scarce. They are quite hardy and will put up with the normal frosts. They do not care for excessive wet, and attention must be paid, therefore, to drainage. In cases where they have to be grown in gardens where the rainfall is high in the winter, it pays to give them a little protection from, say, early January onwards. Apart from this, they can be left alone until about three weeks before they are needed for the salad-bowl. It is then that they must be covered up.

The leaves of the endive are normally bitter, but once they have been etiolated—that is to say, when the green colouring-matter has been largely removed—they are perfectly sweet and delicious to eat. Thus the gardener has to carry out a scheme which is known as blanching, and this means keeping the plants in the dark for a period of a fortnight or three weeks. Blanched endives, however, do not keep, so, once they are ready, they need to be eaten. The secret is, therefore, to blanch as many as are needed, say for a week or ten days, and to aim at following with successive batches at fortnightly intervals. It is just a case of moving the blanching apparatus on a place.

It is all very well to say that the plants must be kept in the dark for a period of time, but how is this to be done? If there is darkness with aeration, then rotting-off is likely to take place. It is possible to dig the plants up with

a good ball of soil to their roots and plant them in a spot where they can be kept in the dark—in a frame, for instance, which is fully covered over with sacking or the like to keep out the light. Still, this transplanting always tends to give a check and the leaves are never quite as crisp as they are when the work is done *in situ*. Those, though, who have not got any other method of blanching can certainly adopt this scheme.

A second scheme, which has proved quite successful, is the covering of, say, one third of the row with continuous cloches, whose glass has been made black by the method of plastering with mud. Some have used thick white-wash instead, but this does not keep out the light in the same way, and it is more difficult to remove afterwards. The ends of the cloches have then to be closed up with a square of wood, while the spaces in between the panes of glass do, of course, provide adequate ventilation.

Gaswicks can be used in a similar manner, only the writer usually throws dry sacks over the top to keep out the light—and muds up the sides.

Those who have earthenware pots to spare may stand one over each plant, taking care to block the drainage holes with cork or a piece of wood. The only problem here is lack of air, and it is sometimes necessary, especially with heavy soils, to raise the ends of the pots ever so slightly with a little stone. An alternative, which is perhaps more suitable to southern conditions than to those of the north, is the tying of each plant round the middle with raffia, or the slipping on of a rubber ring. If, in addition, some straw may be laid along the plants to be blanched, together with a few twiggy sticks to stop the straw from blowing away, the light will be kept out and far more of the plant will be edible than just the heart.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.

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